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LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE LATE

REV. HENRY BELFRAGE, D.D.

OF FALKIRK.

BY THE

REV. JOHN M'KERROW,

BRIDGE-OF-TEITH,

AND

REV. JOHN M'FARLANE,

KINCARDINE.

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TO
THE MEMBERS
OF THE UNITED ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY
OF STIRLING AND FALKIRK,
THIS MEMORIAL
OF A VENERATED BROTHER
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,
IN TESTIMONY
OF
THE HIGH ESTEEM ENTERTAINED FOR THEM
BY THE COMPILERS.



P R E F A C E.

To perpetuate the remembrance of distinguished Christian excellence,—to furnish a bright example of ministerial diligence and fidelity,—and to allure men to the love and practice of piety, by exhibiting to their contemplation a choice specimen of the power of the Gospel,—are the motives which have influenced the Authors of this volume, in presenting to the Public an account of the life and writings of HENRY BELFRAGE. There is nothing in the following pages fitted to excite a romantic interest, as there is nothing in them that partakes, in the slightest degree, of remarkable adventure: but they contain a fine display of those mild, attractive graces, that adorn the Christian character,—blended with much that is noble and dignified in human conduct. Those who love to contemplate the lineaments of the Divine image inscribed upon the vessels of mercy “prepared for glory,” will peruse with pleasurable emotions the

account here given of this eminent minister ; for they will behold these lineaments impressed upon him in their fairest form.

In perusing those memorials of piety and friendship, which were penned by Dr BELFRAGE, and which have been collected together in this volume, the reader can scarcely fail to notice a close resemblance betwixt the subject of this Memoir, and “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” The same kind and gentle spirit breathes in the letters of both. While their bosoms glowed with a feeling of Christian love to their fellow-men, the governing principle of the conduct of both appears to have been ardent attachment to their Divine Redeemer.

In marking the different stages of Dr BELFRAGE’S career, from his childhood till the closing scene of his life, and in recording his varied and extensive labours in the ministry, the compilers have availed themselves of the opportunity, which such a narrative presents, of giving a particular account of the course of study, which the ministers of the United Secession Church are required to undergo, previous to their being invested with the sacred office ; and also of the pastoral duties which, after their ordination, they are required to perform. We have attempted to delineate, as faithfully as we could, the studies, the domestic habits, and official avocations, of that laborious and

useful class of men ; for though the Memoir of Dr BELFRAGE possesses an interest that is, in some respects, peculiar to itself ; yet the account which it contains of ministerial zeal and faithfulness, we rejoice to say, will be found applicable to a large majority of the ministers of the Secession. We have only to add, that the Essay on Dr BELFRAGE'S writings, furnished by our respected brother, Professor BALMER,—and which is inserted at the end of the volume,—will impart an additional interest to the work, and render it, at the same time, more instructive.

This tribute of our affection for departed worth, we lay upon the altar of our Saviour, as an humble offering dedicated to his service ; and, along with it, we present our prayer, that the Divine Spirit would render it instrumental in winning men to the love of holiness, and in promoting the sacred cause of truth and godliness.

JOHN M'KERROW,

BRIDGE-OF-TEITH.

JOHN M'FARLANE,

KINCARDINE.

January 9, 1837.

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LIFE, CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION OF DR BELFRAGE.

His parentage. Birth. Juvenile reminiscences. Early attachment to books. Falkirk parish school. Anecdotes. Early predilection for the ministry. College reminiscences. Letters to his parents. Course of study in the Secession Church. Selkirk. Professor Lawson. Mr Belfrage at the Divinity Hall. Receives license.

THE father of the subject of this Memoir, was the Rev. John Belfrage, Minister of the First Associate Congregation in Falkirk. This venerable man was descended from a respectable family in Kinross-shire. His father was proprietor of Colliston, an extensive farm in the parish of Orwell; and his mother was the only child of the Rev. Andrew Ure, Minister of Fossoway,—a lady who enjoyed in early life the advantages of a first-rate education, and who was distinguished for those mental accomplishments, which give grace and dignity to the female character. Their son, John, was born at Colliston, on the 2d of February 1736, soon after the commencement of the Secession; and, during a long course of ministerial usefulness, he proved one of the brightest ornaments of that Church. Having completed the

usual routine of study, he was ordained at Falkirk, on the 6th of September 1758. Three years after his ordination, he was united in marriage to Miss Jean Whyt, daughter of Mr John Whyt, a respectable corn-merchant, belonging to his own congregation. The education which this lady had received, peculiarly fitted her for the situation which she was called upon to occupy. She had been trained up under the roof of a man eminent for his piety, and was early instructed in the fear of God. Her qualities were more of the solid than the showy kind. Though married at the early age of eighteen, she displayed in her domestic economy all the wisdom and experience of a matured understanding. Unaffected piety, strong good sense, prudent management, and genuine kindness, marked her general deportment. Throughout a long and active life, chequered by a variety of painful trials, she proved herself to be indeed a blessing to her husband and family.

Five sons and seven daughters were the fruits of this union. All of these, with the exception of one who died in infancy, were spared to reach the age of maturity. HENRY was the fourth son, and was born at Falkirk, on the 24th of March 1774. He was dedicated in his infancy, by his mother, to the Lord. He often spoke of the delightful feeling, which he had in his young heart, of the kindness and care of his mother's God, when hushed to sleep by her prayers. Both his parents intended him for the ministry. How early religious impressions were produced upon his mind, it is impossible to tell. From the first dawn of life, even when he had scarcely reached the period of boyhood, he discovered indications of that kindness of heart, that sweetness of disposition, and that regard for sacred things, which so eminently characterized him in riper years. While he was yet a child, and before he was well able to articulate, he was accustomed to direct his steps on Sabbath morning to the church door, in the immediate vicinity of the manse, and there to wait till the beadle opened and gave him admission. By means of these visits he soon ingratiated him-

self with the elders, as they stood, in rotation, at *the plate*,* to receive the offerings of the people. His interesting appearance as a child, and his frequent visits to the sanctuary, reminded them of young Samuel moving about in the court of the tabernacle, and preparing to minister unto the Lord. One of the elders having given him a halfpenny, he held out his little hand, when he returned to the manse, to show his brothers and sisters the present which he had received; and the first articulate language which he was ever known to utter, was in reply to the question, Who had given him the present? In answering this question, he attempted to pronounce the name of the elder from whom he had received it; and the imperfect manner in which he did so, excited a laugh in the junior part of the family circle. This was immediately checked by the pious mother, who told her children that they ought not to be guilty of such levity on the Sabbath. The rejoinder to this was, that as they were only laughing at the awkwardness of Henry, the sin was not great. "There is no sin," said she, "that is small in the sight of God, especially when committed on the Lord's day."

Among the persons to whom young Henry attached himself at this early period, and whose attachment he won in return, was old John Dobbie. John was a finished specimen of a Scottish beadle,—a complete exemplar to all who aspire to that office. He was venerable in his appearance, punctual in his habits, reverential in his manner, and most devoutly attached to the ordinances. When he stood in the

* For the information of readers in the southern part of the island, it may be necessary to state, that in all the Scottish Presbyterian churches a collection is made every Sabbath by the people, as they enter the church in the forenoon. A plate, or collection-box, is stationed at the entry to the place of worship, to receive the voluntary offerings of the people, and an elder stands beside the plate, to take charge of the money thus collected. In many of the dissenting congregations these weekly collections (or at least a certain portion of them) are distributed weekly or monthly among their poor; but in others they are applied to the ordinary purposes of the congregation, such as paying the minister's stipend, &c.

minister's kitchen, waiting to receive the necessary directions, with his blue bonnet under his arm, his hoary locks flowing upon his shoulders, his well-worn Bible in his pocket, and his patriarchal countenance beaming good-will to all, he presented the very image of one of those covenanters, who, in more troublous times, had worshipped God in the mountain recess. He had literally grown grey in the service of the sanctuary; and he felt, in all its force, the sentiment uttered by the son of Jesse, when he said—"A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in tents of wickedness." To this pious official Henry's heart was knit, because he had early learnt to associate with his appearance the idea of sanctity, and because the good man had often shown him kindness, in opening the door to him, and in tending him in his visits to the house of God. When the infirmities of age incapacitated John for occupying his usual place in the sanctuary, and when his eyes grew dim, that he could not see to read, Henry went, after he had acquired the art of reading, and read the Scriptures to him in his dwelling. John's Bible, which had been his counsellor and comforter through life, and which cheered him with its contents in the prospect of death, he left as a precious deposit to his young friend: And, afterward, when Henry was invested with the office of the ministry, this Bible was the one which he ordinarily employed in his library, when engaged in studying the sacred oracles, either for his own benefit, or with a view to the instruction of others.

He was sent early, or, rather, I should say, *he went* early, to school; for he went at first without permission. To his brother, Andrew, who was nearly two years older than himself, he was much attached; and when Andrew was placed under the care of the schoolmaster, Henry would not remain at home. He ran away, when about four or five years of age, to the school door, and beat for admission. "By all means," said the teacher, "allow him to come in, he will soon weary." But Henry became so attached to his lessons,

that nothing would induce him to remain at home. He was a most diligent and attentive scholar. The little fellows that sat on the same bench along with him, by way of amusing themselves, sometimes tried to make him look off his book, but could not succeed. The progress which he made was remarkable. At the age of six he commenced Latin; and he did this that he might keep pace with his brother Andrew. Mr. Meek, the schoolmaster, meeting his mother one day upon the street, said to her, "Mrs Belfrage, I don't know what to do with little Harry, he won't be kept from joining the Latin class with Andrew." "Just let him go on," replied his mother, "he won't fail for want of application: I have no trouble in keeping him at his lessons at home."

At this period a young relative came from Edinburgh to pay Henry and his brothers a visit. The youthful stranger, who was much fonder of play than of learning, was so provoked with Henry, because he would not throw aside his books to join in their juvenile amusements, that he took the young scholar's books and hid them. This was almost more than Henry's good nature could bear. To the person who had used such freedom with his books, he said,—“If you were not our cousin, come out of Edinburgh to see us, I would give you your *licks*.”* To take away from him his books, was to touch the apple of his eye. These were the favourite companions of his boyhood, and they continued to be his favourites through life. Seldom was he happy if he and they were long separated. Often, when a boy, was he seen stretched upon the grass, poring over his book, in the churchyard connected with his father's place of worship. Many an hour did he spend, especially during the summer months, in these solitary studies, surrounded on all hands by the sepulchres of the dead. When we reflect that, at the lapse of more than half a century, the same spot, where his youthful form had oft reclined in the morning of life, drinking in knowledge from the fountains of wisdom, afterward received his mortal remains, worn out with toil in his

* A beating.

Master's service, how applicable to his situation the pious musings of the gifted Henry Kirke White :—

“ ————— ’Tis a nook
Most pleasant. ————— ”
“ Come, I will sit me down and meditate,
For I am wearied with my summer's walk ;
And here I may repose in silent ease :
And thus, perchance, when life's sad journey's o'er,
My harassed soul, in this same spot, may find
The haven of its rest,—beneath this sod,
Perchance, may sleep it sweetly, sound as death.”

The grammar or parish school of Falkirk, where Henry Belfrage received the early rudiments of his education, was at this time superintended by Mr James Meek, a person who, from the account given of him by survivors, was well qualified to inspire the youthful mind with a love of polite literature. He was a good classical scholar, had an excellent taste, and was distinguished for his correct and elegant translation of the Latin classics into the English language. Among the various modes which he adopted for promoting the intellectual improvement of his pupils, he prescribed to them essays on select topics, and thereby early accustomed them to habits of thought and composition. Criticisms were made by him on these juvenile essays, and praise or censure awarded according to their comparative merits. A laudable ambition to excel was thus fostered in the bosoms of the youthful competitors. Under the tuition of this master, and by means of these exercises, young Henry early acquired that fondness for composition, and that taste for elegant diction, which distinguished him through life. In the race for fame, which he ran with his compeers at school, he was seen pressing onward among the foremost. Activity, diligence, and perseverance, characterized him, from first to last, in all his pursuits. His love of learning, and his passionate fondness for books, did not render him unsocial. He was naturally of a cheerful, buoyant disposition ; and, while he was averse to every thing that bore the appearance

of mischief or violence, he engaged with ardour in the innocent and exhilarating sports of his school-mates. He had a heart formed for friendship: It was warm and gentle. While his companions at school esteemed him on account of his mental endowments, they loved him on account of the kindness of his disposition and the gentleness of his manner.

One of his school-fellows, who entered with him on the journey of life, and who now occupies a highly respectable situation as a minister in the United Secession Church,* has transmitted to the writer of these pages the following account of the promising indications which Henry Belfrage gave, during the period of his boyhood, of those excellent moral and intellectual qualities which afterward blossomed more fully, and brought forth such a rich harvest when he reached the years of maturity:—

“He had an ambition to excel, by all fair and honourable means, his fellow-scholars. Whilst he was a regular, diligent, and successful student, he was not of a reserved, morose, or austere temper. He was not inclined to frown on innocent mirth or youthful amusements. He was naturally of a frank, cheerful, and social disposition, which made him esteemed and beloved by his fellow-scholars. But while he was friendly to well-timed hilarity and recreation, as a relaxation from severe study, and as conducive to health of body and vigour of mind, he was always the decided enemy of vice, in whatever shape it might appear. He showed himself to be a fearer of God from his youth. In his early piety there was nothing affected or ostentatious, nothing gloomy or forbidding; but it was sincere, mild, and attractive, which encouraged the hope of his parents and friends (a hope that was afterwards fully realized), that his path would be that of the just, which, like the shining light, ‘shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’

“In early life, he seemed to entertain a deep sense of that moral dignity of demeanour, which appeared conspicuous as he advanced in years; that dignity which refuses to stoop to

* The Rev. William Schaw of Ayr.

what is frivolous, mean, or base. Wilful degradation of character, which exposes to merited contempt and reproach, was an object which he was always most careful to avoid. While he possessed a quick sensibility of what was just, kind, and courteous to his fellows, he had a peculiar delicacy which prompted him to abstain from all rudeness, petulance, or sarcasm,—all, in short, which might have a tendency to offend, or to wound their feelings. In his heart, high and honourable sentiment dwelt with sympathy and love. He was ready to rejoice with them that rejoiced, and to weep with them that wept.”

As an illustration of the character here given him by his early friend, the following incident may be mentioned. It displays a nice sense of honour, and shows how much he was afraid, even in youth, of doing any thing that might be reckoned mean or improper. When a boy, he frequently accompanied his father in his ministerial visitations throughout the congregation. On one of these occasions, they stopped and took dinner at the house of a farmer. The master of the house where they dined, presented Henry with a small piece of silver. Henry, afraid to take it, laid it down, and looked at his father. The father smiled at the embarrassment of the boy, and said,—“ Oh, you may take it.” “ Will it not be stealing, papa, if I take it?” asked the youth. “ No; it is a gift from the owner to you,” was the reply. Of this little incident he was frequently reminded by the family where it happened, when he afterward visited them as their minister.

He gave early indication of that indefatigable perseverance by which he was afterward distinguished. When a boy, of about ten years of age, he resolved one day to act the part of a sentinel; and, having mounted guard, he kept pacing backward and forward, with true military zeal, at the back of a wall, for the space of half a day. His father hearing of what he had done, or perhaps having witnessed it, regarded it as a favourable presage of what might be expected in future life, from Henry’s perseverance. Such traits as these, trivial

though in some respects they may appear, afford a better illustration of character than can be given by the most coloured verbal description.

It has already been mentioned, that his parents intended him for the work of the ministry; and the whole of his education was conducted with a view to that honourable office. His own heart inclined him to second the views of his parents. A love of the ministry early took possession of his mind. This feeling made its appearance along with the first dawnings of intellect. It “grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength.” It manifested itself in his juvenile exercises. From the earliest indications which he was able to give of the workings of his mind, he appears never to have contemplated any prospect with regard to his future employment in life, but one, and that was the prospect of labouring in the work of the ministry. He would occasionally assemble some of his young companions in the church-yard, and mounting a tomb-stone, or taking his stand upon a grave, would give them what he called “a preaching.” A servant in the family, being desirous to know how Henry acquitted himself on these occasions, requested permission from her mistress to be present at one of the exhibitions; but was checked with the interrogatory, what good did she expect to receive from listening to the talk of a boy? To which she replied, that she hoped she would live to see Henry become her minister, and that he would yet visit her in her own house, when she would give him *a bake and a dram*.* After the lapse of a few years, the servant’s anticipations were, to her great joy, realized. She had the pleasure of sitting under his ministry, and of receiving from him many visits. Geordie Liddell, a half-witted lad, was one of the little

* This refers to a practice once universal in Scotland, but now very properly going into disuse, of offering some refreshment, in every house, to the minister, when going the round of his annual visitations, accompanied by his elder. On such occasions, the refreshment presented was literally a glass of spirits and a biscuit, or a piece of bread; and it was not considered sufficiently respectful to the family, if, after a blessing pronounced, the minister and elder did not go through at least the form of tasting.

group, that attended these juvenile exhibitions in the churchyard. When Geordie was in his last illness, after Mr Belfrage became minister in Falkirk, the poor man, remembering the scenes of former days, cried out, "Oh, will no person bring to me *Mr Henry Bevinge*?" Mr Belfrage hearing of his distressed situation, paid him a visit, and prayed with him; and, at parting, slipped into his hands a piece of money.

When Henry was about five years of age, there happened to be some company assembled in his father's house, the conversation turned upon the subject of Negro Slavery, which was beginning at that time to occupy public attention. Young Henry was observed to listen attentively to the discourse; and when the company were gone, he went up to his mother, and pulling her by the gown, said, "Mother, I don't think I can do any thing for the poor negroes, unless I go and preach to them." His father has been heard to remark, that it was from observing proofs of early piety in his favourite boy, that he encouraged him to go forward to the work of the ministry.

Henry was much attached to his father. Nothing delighted him more, than to be permitted to accompany him in his ministerial visitations; and when obliged to remain at home, he frequently went and met him, on his return in the evening, with a lantern. The people accustomed to see him frequently in their houses, along with his father, and pleased with his demeanour, styled him their young minister; and expressed the hope that he would be spared to break amongst them the bread of life, after that his father was gone. Amongst other proofs, which he gave at this early period, of the strong tendency of his mind toward the work of the ministry, he often called upon a pious old lady, who was prevented by the infirmities of age from attending upon the ordinances, and repeated to her portions of his father's sermons. This was a source of great delight to her. The prospect of a son of her venerable pastor being raised up to occupy his father's place, she regarded as a singular mark of

the divine favour upon the town and neighbourhood. She often presented him with books, accompanying the gift with the patriarch's prayer, that the God, before whom his father did walk, would bless the lad, and make him a blessing.

His conduct at home was remarkably peaceable and kind ; and with all the members of the family, young and old, he was a great favourite. Once, and only once, was he known to receive from his father corporal chastisement, and the fault which, in this particular instance, subjected him to the rod, was an act rather of boyish thoughtlessness than of wilful or wanton mischief. A horse was sent in charge of a lad, the distance of several miles, to meet one of his brothers who was returning home from College. Henry, pleased with the idea of getting a ride, accompanied the boy, without the knowledge of his parents ; when his father learned what he had done, he was so offended at his going without permission, and at the young lad being obliged, through Henry's thoughtlessness, to walk all the way, both in going and coming, that he chastised him, to prevent a repetition of similar conduct.

When he had entered upon his thirteenth year, he was sent, along with his brother Andrew, to the University of Edinburgh. There is probably no era in the life of a student more eventful, than when he leaves, for the first time, the parental roof, and enters upon his college curriculum. There, he is removed from under the watchful eye, and the guardian care of his parents. He mingles among strangers, and commences acting his part in the great drama of human life. His youthful breast is agitated by a variety of emotions. He feels sorrow at parting with those who have been the associates of his childhood and his youth, joy at the thought of entering on new and more active scenes, and hope that the path which he is about to pursue, will conduct him to distinction. When he leaves behind him the dwelling, where he has probably spent the happiest part of his life, and which is endeared to him by many a pleasing recollection, gloomy thoughts take possession of his mind, but these are mingled with bright visions of the future, which his fancy

pains. Animated by the counsels addressed to him by the lips of a parent, and committing himself to the care of a kind and watchful providence, he takes his departure, resolving, in the inexperience of his heart, that he will avoid doing what is disgraceful, and that he will pursue such a course as shall reflect credit upon himself and his friends.

With feelings similiar to these, did the subject of this memoir leave the home of his youth, and commence his career as a student. On the morning that he left home, to go to College, his mother and one of his sisters accompanied him for some distance upon his journey; and when they were about to separate, observing his mother to be sorrowful, he took her by the hand, and said to her in an affectionate tone, "Oh, mother, be not vexed, for I will not do anything bad." He commenced his first session at College in November 1786. The following account of the manner in which he conducted himself at College, and of the appearance which he made in the classes, will be perused with interest. It has been communicated in a letter from one of Henry Belfrage's college companions, one who, like himself, has acquired, by his talents and industry, considerable celebrity as an author in the religious world.*

"My acquaintance with Henry Belfrage commenced in Edinburgh, in November 1787, when both of us were second-year students at the College, he having attended the winter immediately preceding, while I remained at home that season, having previously attended the session commencing November 1785. For two successive winters, four of us, viz. Henry Belfrage and his elder brother Andrew, a lively youth, then a student of medicine, and afterwards surgeon at Bo'ness, with my brother Henry (the late Dr Dewar), and myself, were all boarded in Lady Lawson's Wynd, with a Mrs Telford, a pious, kind, and much respected lady,—a member of Dr Hall's congregation. The two Belfrages occupied one room, and the Frasers another. We all, however, took our

* The Rev. Donald Fraser, D. D. of Kennoway, author of the "Lives of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine," and of several other useful publications.

various meals at one table ; and, generally, one fire and one candle served us all. On the whole, we agreed wonderfully well, and were exceedingly happy both winters. We had abundance of the gayety and buoyancy of youth. None of us, probably, was so deeply thoughtful and serious as we should have been ; yet I believe there was but little of that direct levity that even a strict professor would severely condemn. Family worship was regularly performed morning and evening, each of us taking his turn. On Sabbath, we often conversed together in the evening on topics discoursed on by the ministers ; and availed ourselves of a pretty good library of books belonging to our amiable landlady. We were all tolerably industrious in preparing our lessons and reading books, during the week, generally sitting up till twelve, and sometimes till one or two o'clock. We were all, I think, members of two societies of Burgher students, that met every week in Bristo session-house, a debating and a praying society. We somewhat stimulated each other in our literary pursuits.

“ To confine my recollections now to Henry Belfrage, who was about one year younger than I, he even then discovered very considerable ardour, diligence, and perseverance. He was quite punctual in keeping the college hours, and made conscience of mastering every prescribed lesson. Had he a speech or an essay to prepare, he applied to it with great eagerness. He had a lively fancy, and a fondness for poetic flights. Some particular verses from the poets he often repeated in our daily talk with great glee. When his father came from Falkirk to see his sons, I was struck with the parental tenderness of the venerable man, and with his eye beaming benevolence. Henry had always a very filial heart. When the close of the session approached, he used to count the hours that were to run before his return to his father's house. With regard to the figure he made in the classes, so far as I recollect, it was considerably above mediocrity, but somewhat injured by the rapidity of his utterance. He was *then* too hasty both in speaking and writing. Dugald Stewart,

I recollect, spoke favourably of the imagination and ability he discovered in an essay, and then added, ‘ It was so carelessly transcribed, that it was with difficulty I could read it.’ ”

He had a keen relish for the beauties of composition, and was inclined to indulge, especially in the early part of his life, in a florid style of writing. What was tame and nerveless he could not bear. His imagination was exceedingly fertile. It furnished him, at all times, with an abundant supply of figures for the purposes both of ornament and of illustration. In the above extracts, mention is made of his taste for poetry. This continued with him through life. Amid severer studies, he paid his court occasionally to the muses. There were seasons when the pious breathings of his soul were embodied by him in verse. Like the sweet singer of Israel, he now and then employed himself in the composition of sacred lyrics, and they were applied by him to a similar purpose, viz. the praise of his God. But these effusions he kept carefully concealed even from the eye of friendship.

While he resided in Edinburgh, there were two ministers, both of them connected with the Establishment, whom he delighted much to hear: these were Mr Greenfield and Dr Andrew Brown. His taste for fine composition was gratified by listening to them. Their style of preaching was elegant, and well fitted to captivate a mind constituted such as his was. Owing to the frequency of his attendance upon the ministrations of these individuals, his father was alarmed with the report, that his son was going to leave the Secession and connect himself with the Church of Scotland.

During the intervals of the sessions of College, he resided under the roof of his father, and prosecuted his studies with diligence. So intent was he upon study, that when he returned home after the first session, he wondered that his mother had not got a small apartment built for him in the churchyard, where he might enjoy his books in quiet, and be free from the noise and bustle of the family. It was cer-

tainly a great privilege which he enjoyed, that, during the summer months, when he was at home from College, he was under the immediate inspection of his father, and had the advantage of a well selected library, as well as of parental instruction. His father was both a scholar and a divine, and was well fitted, in every respect, for superintending the studies of his son. As Henry advanced in life, his mind opened apace. By a careful improvement of his time when at home, and by diligent application to his studies when attending the University, he became well acquainted with the various departments of polite literature. He was a good classical scholar; and the knowledge which he acquired of the Greek and Hebrew languages, was such as enabled him with ease to study critically the Scriptures in the original.

When he left his native roof to mingle in the active scenes of life, the kindness and gentleness of his disposition continued the same as ever. The sympathies of his heart were easily called into play. He studied to promote the comfort of others no less than his own. A favour done to him he gratefully repaid; while he regarded with detestation every thing that bore the appearance of selfishness, or injustice, or cruelty. The following amiable trait, illustrative of the kindness of his heart, and of his attention to the comfort of others, even though occupying an humble station in life, deserves to be recorded. At the time he attended College, water was an article of considerable scarcity in Edinburgh. No means had then been adopted for bringing it in by pipes, as at present, from the Crawley Springs. In many instances it was a matter of difficulty, even by paying a price for it, to obtain a sufficient supply for family purposes. During one of the winters that Henry and his brother Andrew lodged together, a servant of their aunt brought them a pail-full of water every morning,—carrying it the distance of about half a mile. As oft as the servant came, Henry, grateful for the service thus rendered, had a cup of warm coffee prepared to give her. How few young men, in his situation, would have thought it worth their while to put themselves to any trouble

to study the comfort of a menial. What a beneficial effect would it have upon the feelings and happiness of that humble, but useful class of persons, if those whom they serve, would show the same attention to their personal comfort, that our young student did. The girl never forgot his kindness. Several years afterward, when she was married and settled in life, having received intelligence that he was to preach in Edinburgh, she travelled a distance of sixteen miles to hear him. After the discourse she waited upon him ; when he, mindful of her former attention to him, gave her at parting half a guinea.

During his attendance at College, he frequently corresponded, by letter, with the different members of his father's family at home. The following are some of the fragments of this correspondence, which have been preserved. They are chiefly interesting, as illustrative of that amiable and affectionate disposition, which formed one of the most delightful features of his character, both in youth and in advanced life. Writing to his father, he says :—

“ I am extremely well pleased with my classes here. I am beloved and respected by my master and fellow-students. I am well in my health, and comfortable in my lodgings. I am happy to hear from home, that my mother is continuing better : I hope that her jaunt to Stirling will do her good. I hope that your and the family's peace will be no more disturbed by this affair of the helper. Your peace will ever be dear to me ; and to hear of its being broken by this or any other matter, would give me the bitterest concern.”

His father had written to him, to consult his uncle, Mr Whyt, concerning a law case. After stating, in a letter to his father, Mr. Whyt's opinion, he makes his own remarks, as follows :

“ It is a great pity but that something should be done for ———. The brutality of ——— to his wife, is the most unaccountable thing I ever knew. It is unprovoked malice in the highest degree. If he were meeting with improper behaviour

from her, there might be some shadow of excuse for him, though even then his conduct would be mean and unworthy. But to persecute, to harass and imbitter her existence, who ought of all others to be dearest to him, is not like a man but a devil. His heart must be dead to every gentle disposition. He shows himself a stranger to the religion of Jesus, which is a system of benevolence, and to the example of our Saviour, who, though under the pressure of calamity, and suffering the most excruciating torture, forgot not his nearest relation, but recommended her to the protection of the friend of his bosom, in his last hour."

Having received from a friend a present of a small sum of money, he could not be satisfied until he sent a portion of it home to his mother, as a proof of his filial regard. The donation was accompanied by the following letter:—

"I am highly pleased with my classes. I have this day entered a French class, and with Scott I mean to attend a writing-master, to improve my hand. If the people I stay with continue as kind and attentive as at present, my residence here will be very comfortable. I am rather uneasy at being so long from home; but as I know I shall be the better of it, and that it will be the last time of coming here to stay, I will submit to it. To your care I commit my books. From my friends, particularly my uncle and aunt, I receive the most unbounded attention. I hope that the family are as well as usual. May the providence of God defend us from all evil: May the Almighty befriend us in every exigency of life, and raise us in due time to those celestial mansions where the wise and the virtuous shall be happy for ever. Trust in God is the best remedy under the calamities of life, and it is this which gives a relish to prosperity. He will never forsake the upright. His blessing rests upon the habitation of the good; and sooner or later they ever shall be prosperous. My kindest compliments to my dear father, sisters, and brothers. I hope that the children will be going soon to school. With my dearest wishes for your happiness, I am, my dear mother, your affectionate son,

"HENRY BELFRAGE.

"I am exceedingly happy in sending a small mark of my

affection. I could not enjoy my present without making you a partaker of it."

Mr. Belfrage, as has already been stated, looked forward from an early period to the work of the ministry as his employment through life. When the period arrived for entering upon the study of divinity, he had not his choice to make. He had long resolved to consecrate his talents and learning, and all that he possessed, to the service of his divine Master. Nor did he hesitate whether he should become a minister in the Establishment or in the Secession Church. To the Establishment he cherished, through life, a feeling of good-will; and with many of its ministers he was in habits of friendly intercourse. But the abuses connected with it as a Church, were too numerous and too glaring to permit him ever once to entertain the idea of becoming a labourer within its precincts. His feelings and his judgment alike inclined him to the Secession. He had been trained up at the feet of one of the most venerable of its ministers. He approved of its constitution. He loved the simplicity of its forms; and he knew, from his own observation, the purity and fidelity of its administration.

There is no Church which requires its candidates for the office of the ministry to undergo a more complete course of training than the Secession; and there is none which watches over them, at every stage of their progress, with more incessant care. After they leave school, their course of training includes a period of at least eight, and not unfrequently nine, years. Three, but much more frequently four, years are spent by them in attending one of the Scottish Universities. During this period they are required to study the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; and must also make themselves acquainted with Logic, and with Moral and Natural Philosophy. *Previous* to their admission to the study of divinity, they must be examined by the Presbytery on all these branches of learning. They usually undergo, at the same time, an examination with regard to their personal

piety, and their motives in seeking to enter into the office of the ministry. Having given satisfaction to the Presbytery in these various particulars, they are then permitted to become students in the Theological Seminary. Here they are required to attend five sessions,—each session consisting of not less than eight weeks. During the course of their attendance at the Theological Seminary, they enjoy the benefit of the prelections of four professors. The first and second years of the course, they attend the lectures of the Professor of Biblical Literature, and the Professor of Exegetical Theology, or Exposition of the Holy Scriptures; the third, fourth, and fifth years, they are under the superintendence of the Professor of Systematic Theology, and the Professor of Pastoral Theology and Ecclesiastical History. They are subjected to frequent examinations on the subjects of the professors' lectures. They are required to read, and critically to analyze, portions of the Old and New Testaments in the original languages. Each professor requires all the students under his charge to deliver, every session, either a lecture, a sermon, or a critical dissertation. Once or twice in the course of the year they are required by the Presbytery, within whose bounds they reside, to appear before them and deliver a discourse on some prescribed subject; and also to be examined on some particular department of theology. Such is the course of training to which the Secession Church requires its candidates for the ministry to submit, before it licenses them to preach the Gospel.

It is proper, however, to remark, that of late years a considerable enlargement of the course has taken place. At the time when Mr Belfrage commenced the study of divinity, there was only one Theological Professor whom the students were required to attend. The Theological Seminary of the Associate Synod was, at that period, under the superintendence of the Rev. George Lawson of Selkirk. He had lately succeeded, in this important charge, the Rev. John Brown of Haddington. There are many to whom the mentioning

of the name of *Selkirk*, will even yet bring up a variety of delightful recollections. Situated in a most interesting district of country, imbosomed in the midst of lofty and verdant mountains, possessing all the seclusion and quiet of a small country town, and surrounded on all hands by scenes of sylvan beauty, where the student can pursue his solitary walk, and indulge in meditation without interruption from any human being,—it is scarcely possible that any locality could be better adapted for being the seat of a school of divinity. Here all the theological students belonging to the Associate Synod assembled every year, about the beginning of August, and continued till about the middle or end of September. The weeks which they spent in this sweet retirement, were ordinarily weeks of great enjoyment. Many of them, during the remaining part of the year, were engaged in the laborious employment of teaching; and this was to them a season of relaxation. Warm-hearted friends, who seldom, if ever, saw one another except during the meetings of the Hall, here met and cemented the friendships which had previously been formed: and many, many of these friendships, though interrupted for a season by death, we doubt not, are destined to continue through eternity.

The Rev. George Lawson, under whose superintendence the students prosecuted the study of divinity, during the weeks they spent at Selkirk, was a person eminently qualified for the charge which the Synod had devolved upon him. Before he was appointed, in 1787, to fill the Theological Chair, his attainments in biblical learning were so great, that he could quote readily from memory, either in the original Hebrew or Greek, or in the English version, and explain *extempore*, and with critical precision, almost any portion of the sacred volume. “He needed no concordance, and he used none. Notwithstanding unremitting attention to every pastoral duty required in a considerable congregation, widely spread over the country, such were his well-known attainments, that at the age of thirty-eight years, he was appointed Professor of Divinity by the Synod to

which he belonged.” The Rev. David Greig of Lochgelly, who was long and intimately acquainted with him, and who was no mean judge of merit in others, pronounced the following high eulogium upon his varied and transcendent acquirements. Addressing a young friend, who was about to commence his theological studies under Professor Lawson, he said to him,—“ You are going to be taught by a man, every way so learned and excellent, that probably he has not, in these respects, ten equals, or one superior in Scotland ; and, what is best of all, he does not himself know or suppose that such is or can be the case.”*

The following is an outline of the mode in which Professor Lawson conducted the studies of the young men during the period of their attendance upon his prelections :—

“ The plan of Dr Lawson’s theological course was simple and judicious. It was his wish that every student, during the period of his attendance at the Hall, should have an opportunity of hearing his whole course of lectures on theoretical and practical divinity. For this purpose, though each session continued only nine weeks, he regularly went over his full course on the system in five sessions. The students were regularly examined on the subject of the lectures which they had heard,—a practice admirably calculated to secure their attention, and to promote their improvement.

“ The doctor was accustomed also, every session, to make his pupils read with him, and critically analyze a part of the Holy Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek. Pertinent questions were proposed by him, on such occasions, leading, at once, to the formation of the sound critic, and the edifying practical exposition of the divine Word. The continued study of the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, and of their criticism, and of the practical use of the sacred volume, were thus strongly recommended. A laudable ambition to excel in these important exercises was excited and kept alive, and, in many cases, led to very valuable results.

* Christian Repository, vol. v. p. 208.

“During the course of his first session of attendance, every student was required to prepare and deliver a homily on a subject assigned him by the professor; and generally to prepare two, and sometimes three, discourses, each of the other four sessions. All the subjects were assigned by the professor at the close of one session, on which discourses were required to be ready for being delivered the session following. Of these discourses, some were lectures, others sermons; some critical, and others practical; and one or more of them popular, to be delivered, not only before the professor and students, but before all the people who chose to attend.

“Before delivering his own remarks on these discourses, the professor gave every student who chose, an opportunity of offering his criticisms on what he had heard. Veneration for the enlightened and liberal tutor, was found sufficient, in almost every instance, to prevent hasty and uncandid remarks. Few availed themselves, prematurely, of the privilege; but almost all were zealous in preparing themselves for doing it wisely. It was, generally, by those who had attended for three or four sessions, that observations on the discourses were made. Always kept under proper regulation by the superintendence of the professor, this exercise became a source of much improvement among the young men.

“No time or pains, which might promise to be useful, were spared by the venerable guide of their studies. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, he convened his pupils twice a-day, and once on Wednesdays and Saturdays; so that his ordinary sederunts with them, every week, were *ten*, or *ninety* in the course of each session. For the most part, these sederunts were long; not a scanty hour, but whatever portion of time was requisite for the important object in view, was cheerfully bestowed. On those days on which the professor met only in the forenoon with his students, they either met in the afternoon by themselves, to deliver, hear, and criticise essays on important subjects, for

their mutual improvement; or, in the evening, along with all the Christian people who chose to attend. These public meetings were held six times in each session; at every such meeting, three of the students, in rotation, or by appointment, each gave out a psalm or hymn, and prayed; and two others delivered short prepared and practical discourses or addresses. Often the whole, and always a part of the exercises at these meetings, was connected with the great and most interesting subject of evangelizing the world, by the dissemination of the divine word among all nations, in their vernacular languages, and by the labours of Christian missionaries. As long as his bodily strength enabled him, the professor attended these meetings, to render them as useful as possible by his presence. He always spoke last himself on these occasions, and concluded with prayer. These meetings were well attended, and highly useful both to the students and people. They tended to cherish devotion and a missionary spirit in all, and to form the young men for addressing a public audience with ease and readiness.

“Every meeting of the Hall was begun and closed with prayer. With great fervour of devotion, the professor himself opened the first, and closed the last sederunt of each week, and the students, by rotation, opened and closed the other meetings with prayer.

“From this short account, it appears that the meetings, ordinary and extraordinary, of the professor with his students, each session, were *ninety-six*. The average time devoted to each meeting was probably more, but certainly not less, than an hour and a half, or 144 each of the five sessions of attendance. This, it will be observed, is considerably more than the average time devoted to the public instruction of their pupils by the theological professors in the different Universities. If we take the average of their sessions at twenty-four weeks, and their weekly meetings at five, each of an hour's length, the time employed by them in public instruction each session will be 120 hours. This, it is known, is more than is really so employed, and yet it comes con-

siderably short of the time devoted by Dr Lawson to the instruction of his pupils, in his session of only nine weeks' continuance. If the session was short, it had the advantage of being wholly devoted to theological studies. The bell never, as at the Universities, broke off any important business unfinished. The students were never called off as tutors, or in any other character, to attend elsewhere to other business, and forget the sacred investigations in which they had been engaged. Teaching schools, or acting as tutors to young gentlemen, is the common, necessary, and in many respects highly useful employment, for the greater part of the year, of the great majority of theological students, both in the Established Church and among Dissenters. This makes it a matter of great importance, and almost of indispensable necessity, that the sessions of the Divinity Hall, in such a body as the Secession, be short, and that they be held during the harvest vacations of schools and other seminaries of learning.

“Such is a general outline of Dr Lawson's mode of conducting the studies of the young men put under his care. These were occasionally varied, according to times and circumstances, and to serve important purposes. To this plan, however, so comprehensive, so judiciously adapted to circumstances, and so well calculated, through the divine blessing, to form his pupils for being able, pious, and useful ministers of Christ, Dr Lawson adhered, in its substance, for the thirty-three years of his professorship. In pursuing it, the whole circle of human learning was ever at his command. The powers of original and transcendent genius were ever manifest. The most profound discussion became always simple and plain under his management.”*

Such was the course of theological training to which Mr Belfrage was subjected, in common with his fellow-students, while prosecuting the study of divinity, under the able and enlightened tuition of Professor Lawson. He entered the

* Memoir of the Rev. George Lawson, D. D., in the *Christian Repository* for 1820.

Divinity Hall in autumn 1789; and he prosecuted his studies there with the same assiduity and zeal which he had manifested during the preceding part of his course. When he entered upon the study of divinity, he had little more than completed his fifteenth year. He remembered, however, the advice given by Paul to his young friend Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth." Accordingly, it was remarked of him, at this period, that he was less lively, and more grave and sedate, than he had been at College. He considered that the conduct of a student in divinity ought to be exemplary, no less than that of a minister; and, young though he was, he endeavoured to recommend religion to others, by the holiness and consistency of his life.

The subject of his first discourse at the Hall was peculiarly suited to the natural cast of his mind. It was,—
"Pious Meditation," founded on Psalm i. 2; "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." The discourse, as a specimen of composition, was respectable; and was favourably received by the professor and students. During his attendance at the Hall, Mr Belfrage seldom, if ever, ventured to make any critical remarks upon the discourses of his fellow-students. This was owing to natural timidity, or modesty, rather than to any want of ability; for after he became a minister, there was no exercise in which he excelled more, or in which he proved himself more useful, as a member of a church-court, than in the judicious and able manner in which he made observations on the discourses of the young men, when they appeared before the Presbytery as candidates for license or for ordination.

During the period that Mr Belfrage attended the Divinity Hall, he still prosecuted his studies at College. The months of his attendance at the Hall, each session, were August and September; and instead of remaining at home during the winter months, he went to Edinburgh, and attended some of the classes at the University. So that, from the period of thirteen, when he first left school, till the

period of nineteen, when he was licensed, his winter months were spent almost wholly within the precincts of a College. In this way was his mind richly stored with a variety of useful knowledge; and, in so far as the learning of this world was concerned, he became eminently qualified, by the long curriculum through which he passed, for that station of eminence and of usefulness in the church of Christ, which he was afterward called upon to occupy.

At that period, the demand for preachers by the Associate Synod was urgent; and Mr Belfrage, along with the other divinity students, who were of the same standing with himself, was required to take license, before he had completed the prescribed course at the Hall.* Mr Belfrage's whole time had been devoted, from his earliest years, to preparation for the work of the ministry. Considering the peculiar advantages which he had enjoyed, both from his father's instructions at home, and also from his long attendance at College, few young men were ever called upon to preach the Gospel, with a mind more thoroughly disciplined for the work than his was. Obeying the summons given him by the Associate Synod, he appeared before the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk, on the 16th of May 1793, and being examined by them with regard to his knowledge of divinity, he had the usual trial exercises prescribed to him, with a view to license. These exercises he finished to the complete satisfaction of the Presbytery, on the 1st July, the same year, when he was licensed to preach the everlasting Gospel.

* Instead of attending five sessions at the Hall, he attended only four.

CHAPTER II.

FROM HIS LICENSE TO HIS FIRST VISIT TO LONDON.

Probationers of the Secession Church. Mr Belfrage's popularity as a preacher. His personal appearance. Receives calls from Falkirk, Saltecoats, and Lochwinnoch. Ordination at Falkirk. Prosperity of his congregation. His brother Andrew. Extracts from his brother's letters. Death and character of his father. Letters from the Rev. Robert Greig of Sticheil. Miles' Lane congregation, London. Mr Belfrage's first visit to London. Letters from London.

ACCORDING to the rules of the Secession Church, when a Presbytery licenses any individual to preach the Gospel, they are required to give a report to the Synod, at its first meeting, of the fact of his being licensed. His name is then inserted, by order of Synod, in the list of preachers. At each meeting, a scheme of appointments is drawn out, containing the names of all the probationers, and pointing out the particular districts where each is to labour during the months that intervene betwixt one meeting of Synod and another. The scheme is, in general, so methodically prepared, and so skilfully arranged, that all the preachers, whatever be their number, succeed one another, according to a certain rotation, in the different Presbyteries. In going the round of their Synodical appointments, they have an opportunity afforded them of preaching, in their turn, in the vacant congregations belonging to the Association. By this arrangement, the congregations who are in want of a minister, have it in their

power to hear a variety of preachers, even though they should be situated in a remote district of country ; and in making a selection of one to break amongst them the bread of life, there is no limitation to their choice. They have the privilege of calling any probationer who is on the list. In giving a call, *every member* of the congregation, who is not under scandal, has the right of voting. It frequently happens that the same individual is called by more than one congregation. Formerly, when a case of competition occurred betwixt two or more congregations calling the same person, it was usually referred to the Synod to determine to which of the congregations he ought to be sent. But now the United Associate Synod leave it, under certain regulations, to the person who receives more than one call, to declare which of the calls he is inclined to accept ; and he is forthwith appointed to be ordained in that congregation to which he gives the preference.

Mr Belfrage having received license, took his place amongst the probationers of the Secession Church. Wherever he was appointed to preach, his labours were peculiarly acceptable. Few preachers ever enjoyed a greater share of popularity than he did. His popularity was not of the meteor-kind, blazing for a moment, and then speedily expiring, when the novelty which gave it birth had ceased. It rested upon a solid foundation, and instead of diminishing, it continued to increase. A variety of favourable circumstances combined to render him an object of attraction to the congregations. When he commenced his career as a preacher, he was youthful in his appearance, having little more than completed his nineteenth year. His person was tall and commanding. He had a most pleasing countenance, which indicated great sweetness and benevolence of disposition. His dark and expressive eyes sparkled when he spoke. The tones of his voice were soft and silvery. They fell upon the ear like music. There was a peculiar pathos in his manner. He spoke like one desirous to find the way to the hearts of his hearers. The style of his preaching was

ornate; but, at the same time, it was richly imbued with the language of Scripture. His discourses possessed, in a high degree, a union of doctrinal statement and practical illustration. A spirit of devotion breathed throughout the whole. While the beauty of his language, and the richness of his imagery, were fitted to secure for him a favourable hearing from the young, there was an unction—a *savouriness*—in almost every thing he uttered, flowing as it were fresh from the Cross, that was peculiarly pleasing to the experienced Christian.

It was not to be expected that a preacher who possessed so many recommendations, should remain long without a call. His father's congregation in Falkirk had been looking forward to his license with eager expectation; and scarcely had he made his appearance in public, when they adopted measures to invite him to become colleague to his revered parent. On the 31st of August 1793, a most harmonious call was given to him by that congregation. The Rev. Michael Gilfillan, of Dunblane, presided on the occasion. The call was most numerously subscribed, there being no fewer than 643 names appended to it. Soon after this, calls were given to him by two other congregations,—Saltcoats and Lochwinnoch. According to the usual practice at that period, it was referred to the Supreme Court to determine in which of these places he should labour. When the Associate Synod met in the month of May, the following year, their decision was given in favour of Falkirk. “On that occasion, his father made a speech, from the fulness of his heart, in favour of his people's claim; and when that court, by a unanimous decision, appointed Mr Belfrage to be minister in Falkirk, he regarded it as the sanction of Heaven to a relation which should unite his son more closely to him. He rejoiced in it, not merely as what might be his solace in advanced life, and a comfort to his family, but as likely to maintain the peace of his congregation, and most earnest were his prayers that it might contribute to advance their best interests.”

His ordination took place at Falkirk, on the 18th of

June 1794. The Rev. Robert Campbell, of Stirling, commenced the services of the day, by preaching a discourse from Ezekiel iii. 17; "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel," &c. His father, who presided, preached the ordination sermon, from Acts xx. 28; "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The connection formed on this occasion was a happy one to all the parties concerned. The father rejoiced in having his son to be a fellow-labourer with him in the ministry. The son rejoiced that he was called, in the providence of God, to occupy a station where he would enjoy the benefit of his father's counsels, and where he would have it in his power to soothe, by his kind attentions, the declining years of his much-beloved parents. The people rejoiced in having placed over them a workman who gave such promising indications of future usefulness, and whose varied accomplishments so well fitted him to sustain amongst them the dignity of the ministerial character.

In a memorial of his father, which filial affection prompted him to draw up, and which was afterward published by him in his "Monitor to Families," he expresses, in the following terms, the high satisfaction which he enjoyed, in being ordained as his father's colleague, and the great happiness which he experienced in his new relation. "Cordiality, perfect and uninterrupted, blessed this connection, nor could it be embittered by any of those feelings which sometimes have rendered such situations so miserable. The Apostle Paul beautifully says of Timothy, 'As a son with a father, he served with me in the Gospel,' words expressing their harmonious and affectionate co-operation in the work of the Lord, and they were fully realized in this conjunction in the ministry, where affection in the one case was mingled with entire confidence, and in the other with the highest respect. What a blessing was such a situation to one ordained to the ministry at twenty years of age! Its advantages and its plea-

tures must be objects of his grateful remembrance to his dying day.”

After his ordination at Falkirk, Mr Belfrage commenced that course of arduous and unwearied labour, for which he was distinguished throughout the whole of his ministerial career. The congregation over which he was ordained, was respectable for its numbers, and it was still more so for its intelligence and piety. Almost from its infancy it had been fed with the finest of the wheat. In the early stage of its existence, it had been favoured, for a period of ten years, with the ministrations of Mr Henry Erskine, son of Mr Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline. He was succeeded by Mr Belfrage's father, who had now laboured among them for the long period of thirty-six years. His theological attainments were of no ordinary kind. His pastoral diligence and fidelity were also great, and a people, the greater part of whom had been trained up from their infancy under the ministrations of such an individual, could scarcely fail to rank high for their scriptural knowledge and their christian conduct. On the cultivation of this field, Mr Henry Belfrage entered at the early age of twenty. His flock was scattered over an extensive district of country, spreading out in all directions to the distance of several miles. To perform the ordinary routine of ministerial duty amongst them, in visiting and catechising, required no small physical strength, as well as a considerable portion of mental energy. But our young minister plied his holy vocation amongst them with an assiduity, a prudence, and a kindness, which have rarely been equalled, and never surpassed. The sick and the poor received a large share of his attention. Often did he direct his steps to the chamber of the afflicted and the dying. The young were the objects of his affectionate solicitude ; and the aged found in him a kind-hearted comforter and friend. He made a point of preparing regularly for the pulpit ; and the time which he was able to spare from his numerous avocations, was faithfully employed by him in the improvement of his own mind.

One of his early companions, already mentioned in a preceding part of this memoir,* and who was at that period a member of Mr Belfrage's congregation, has transmitted the following account of the commencement of his ministry at Falkirk :—"That day on which this sacred union was consummated (the day of the ordination), was hailed by all parties concerned, as most auspicious. It was a day which they desired to see, and in which they delighted; and there can be no doubt that the sincere and fervent prayers which were presented to the only Head of the Church, that he would pour down, in rich abundance, the influences of his Holy Spirit, to accompany and to follow the solemn services which were then performed, received a gracious answer in the blessed experience of many who are now in heaven, and of some who are still upon earth. And the writer of this can testify, that the person then ordained to the holy office of the ministry, though but a youth, was a youth of great promise; and the hopes, which were entertained by the devout and intelligent of the congregation, were not disappointed as he advanced in life. As his day so was his strength, to perform the various and important duties to which he was called. And it deserves particularly to be noticed, that in his prayers there appeared a piety, accompanied with a solemnity and pathos, which has been but rarely equalled. They clearly showed the workings of a mind familiarly acquainted with heavenly intercourse, and were admirably fitted to prepare the hearers, for listening with devout attention to the word afterward read or preached.

"His discourses, in the early part of his ministry, while savoury with evangelical truth, in which he had an excellent instructor in his father, abounded in figurative allusions, which showed an exuberancy of fancy peculiarly attractive to the young. And such a luxuriance, which rigid criticism would say required the pruning knife, indicated a fertility in the soil whence it sprung, which the culture of maturer years did greatly improve. The delivery of his discourses, at this period, was rapid and fluent. It called forth great bodily

* Rev. William Schaw.

exertion, and was exhausting to the animal spirits. It was, however, accompanied with a gravity, a warmth, and earnestness, which rendered him exceedingly popular. This was manifest from the members of the congregation greatly increasing, and from the crowded audiences which he usually had, when he preached on the evening of the Lord's Day, which was the custom so long as the collegiate charge continued. His delivery, though afterward it became much more slow, was always solemn and often pathetic, which secured his popularity, to the end of his days."

A new impulse was given to the congregation by the ordination of Mr Belfrage. His popularity as a preacher, his ministerial diligence, his prudent conduct, and unaffected piety, speedily secured for him a high standing in the church. Multitudes were attracted to his ministry by the excellence of his pulpit exhibitions, as well as by his amiable manners in the private intercourse of life. In his own immediate neighbourhood, where he was best known, he was a favourite with all classes; and in his history is to be found a most distinguished exception to the truth of the Scripture proverb, that "A prophet hath no honour in his own country." A rapid increase of his flock took place, and the tide of prosperity, which set in upon his congregation, scarcely met with a single check during the whole course of his ministry. Soon after his settlement, the controversy concerning the magistrates' power in matters of religion, began to be agitated in the Associate Synod. He, himself, did not take any prominent part in the controversy, but the consequence of it was the secession from the congregation of a small number of persons, who were attached to what has been ordinarily termed *Old Light* principles. The breach, if breach it could be called, was so insignificant, as scarcely to affect the appearance of the congregation.

During the short period that his father was spared to labour along with him, he found in him a wise counsellor and an excellent co-adjutor. They went, hand in hand together, in every good work. The father shared with the son the

labours of the pulpit upon Sabbath, and frequently accompanied him in his visitations during the week. In the communication from Dr. Fraser of Kennoway, noticed above, the writer says, "A few weeks after his ordination, I had the pleasure of spending one night in his father's house. I was delighted in the morning to see the father and son set off together, on horseback, to visit some distant district of the congregation."

Three years after his ordination, he was called upon to mourn the loss of a beloved brother,—a brother to whom his heart was knit in the warmest affection. This was his brother Andrew. They had been first at school, and then at College together, and until separated (after reaching the period of manhood), to follow their respective employments in different regions of the globe, they had travelled side by side in the journey of life. Andrew was a young man of great promise. In him excellent natural talents were combined with all the accomplishments which a complete education could impart. Having devoted himself to the medical profession, he commenced business in a country town, where he was much respected and beloved ; but, after a short period, he received an appointment, as surgeon, in the army. The regiment, to which he was appointed, was under the command of Colonel Abercrombie, son of the gallant Sir Ralph. When he received his appointment, the regiment was engaged in active service in the West Indies. He followed it thither, assisted in the capture of several islands, and was rising rapidly in his profession, when he fell an untimely victim to the yellow fever. After an illness of two days, he descended to the grave, amid the tears and regrets of both officers and men. We give a few extracts from the letters of this accomplished youth to his friends at home. They have been extracted from an account of him, written by his brother Henry, as a tribute of affection to his memory, but which was never published.

In a letter written immediately after his arrival in the West Indies, speaking of his voyage, he says :—

“ You can hardly conceive anything more delightful than our voyage. Sea-sickness did not continue above a day. A regular breeze filled our sails, and kept our ship so steady, that we breakfasted and dined every day upon deck. The fleet moved close together; and every hour of the day we conversed with our friends on board of other vessels, while crowds of flying-fishes, moving about, and often coming on board, to avoid their voracious enemy the dolphin, contributed to amuse and enliven us.”

Of Barbadoes, where he first landed, he says:—

“ It seems hilly and bare, and the wood is nearly all cut down,—a circumstance which, while it diminishes the beauty of a country, adds much to its healthfulness. Countries covered with wood are always moist, the trees preventing the beams of the sun from exhaling the rain and dew, which must, of consequence, stagnate, and become unwholesome. The ground seems sandy, covered in part with rough grass, and with the prickly pear; while around, plantations of the cocoa-nut-tree and the banana, stretch their grotesque leaves in the most curious directions. The heat is great, and would be insupportable, were it not for the refreshing south-east wind, which, rising as the sun mounts upwards, mitigates his burning rays.”

He went, soon after this, with the expedition against the Dutch settlements of Demerara and Berbice. In the attack upon the first of these, the care of a kind providence was conspicuous. When the boats had approached within a stone-cast of the shore, they stuck fast in the mud, so that if the Dutch had brought a single field-piece to bear upon them, they must have destroyed their whole force; but the appearance of a formidable fleet led them to surrender. Concerning Demerara, he says:—

“ It is a most beautiful country, almost entirely covered with wood; and an amazing quantity of the finest fruit grows here. A number of birds of the most beautiful plumage fly about; and parrots are plentiful beyond our blackbirds at home.”

After this, he went to the capture of St Lucea. Describing the appearance of this island, he says :—

“ A view cannot be conceived more wild and romantic, than that which this island presents. It is nothing but an assemblage of hills of a conical form, and of ravines ; and over the one, and down the other, the soldiers and sailors were obliged to make roads, to bring up the heavy cannon to bear against the strongest post of the enemy. When the battery was about to open, the enemy sent down a flag of truce, and surrendered.”

From St Lucea he went with the army to Martinique. Writing from this island, he says :—

“ The town of Sebastian is one of the finest in the West Indies. The streets are paved and regular, and the houses built of stone. It lies at the bottom of a high hill, which is contiguous to others still higher ; but they do not rise perpendicular. The slope is gradual, and being cultivated with sugar-cane, and many beautiful and nutritious plants, presents a charming picture to the eye. We extend our view along these cultivated spots to the tops of the smaller hills, planted with the cocoa-nut-tree and the mountain cabbage, or to those mountains whose summits are almost lost in the clouds. There is a hollow made in the middle of each street ; and the water from the hills, being conveyed down through every street, cools the air, and refreshes the eye amazingly.”

His last station was in Dominica. He landed in this island in August 1796, and remained in it till his death, which took place eleven months after. The accounts he gives of it in his letters are highly interesting :—

“ Morne Bricee, where we are posted, stands above the town of Roseau, and is about a mile from it. The barracks of the men and officers command a prospect of the sea and of the coast, to the extent of thirty miles or more. The hill stretches behind the barracks, in a long ridge, forming, with two other hills, which run in the same direction, deep ravines ; and down the right ravine a pretty large river runs, which is full of very good fish.

Upon this ridge my house stands, which is neat and commodious. Before and behind, I have a little sloping lawn, which is covered with perpetual green. A little farther backward, the hospital stands, after which the ridge ends, and mountains of amazing height and variety spring up abruptly behind it; some running along in sharp inaccessible ridges, while others rise with a broader head, and are covered with the sweetest verdure of spring. Such a variety as this of hill, often mingled with valley, glen, or precipice, forms a prospect of romantic beauty and grandeur, over which the eye wanders delighted. I have frequently walked to the top of these high hills; and I can assure you, that owing to the constant breeze, and there being little reflection of the sun's rays, the heat is very moderate."

In another letter he says:—

"The year 1797 is arrived, and you are now pinched by the frost or chilled by the cold blast. The day, dull and gloomy, in which the sun scarcely appears, is succeeded by a night long and dark, in which nearly two-thirds of your time are occupied, and in which you must, by artificial heat, labour to compensate for the want of that genial warmth which the sun's beams only bestow. How different is our situation. While you freeze with cold, I am scorched with heat. The chilling north wind makes you shiver: the sultry south wind almost suffocates me. The sun shines here with the most vivid and burning rays. Yet, after all, neither of us feels his situation unpleasant. Man, in every clime, endeavours by art to counteract what is hurtful, to remove what is disagreeable, and to accommodate himself to what he cannot avoid. In short, I cannot say that the climate of the West Indies is to me unpleasant. This season is with us the coolest in the year. After the sun sets, and before he rises, nothing can be more fresh or more agreeable than the air which blows. Even during the day, the trade-wind blows with greater force, and is most refreshing; and our barracks being situated on a hill, every breeze reaches us. I have made many excursions into the country, and have almost gone over the island, which is mountainous throughout. Wherever you go, hills and steep valleys appear, like what you see in the Highlands. Setting aside the difference of climate, and the luxuriance of natural produc-

tions, the external form is the same. It will surprise you much to hear, that the sensitive plant, which is preserved with so much care in your gardens, is the most common weed in this island, and its sensibility is a thousand times more exquisite. I suppose there are a thousand plants around my little chateau. Although this island is very much covered with wood, the birds are very few ; not amounting to six different species, and of these there are none that are remarkable for their notes. A number of parrots are to be found in the highest hills, but they are very wild. The humming-bird is almost the only one we think worth notice. It is about the length and thickness of your little finger, with most beautiful green and golden plumage. Its bill is long and sharp, to extract the sweets from the flowers on which it feeds. It flies about from flower to flower, like the bee at home.

“ This island is plentifully supplied with water. Several rivers run on both sides of the island ; and in almost every ravine there is a brook formed by the rain which falls on the cloud-capt hills above. Nothing can equal the coolness of the water ; nor is there anything so pleasant as a draught from a rivulet or spring in this country. Covered on each side by overhanging trees, or secured from the rays of the sun by the mountains, the brooks glide along on sandy beds, or gurgle among the stones ; and, sometimes falling from steep rocks, they form cascades, and descend into basins formed by the hand of nature to receive them.”

While thus sensitively alive to all in the world of nature that could interest or charm, he felt, in the religious and moral state of the West Indies, much to grieve and to disgust him. In the last letter which his friends received from him, he thus expresses the feelings of a heart vexed from day to day with the wickedness that prevailed around :—

“ I am perfectly tired, not of this country, but of the inhabitants, whose morals and principles are most disgusting. Every thing that tends to ennoble the mind, to elevate the feelings, or to chasten the imagination, is here unknown. The most bare-faced licentiousness, and the grossest impiety, combined with all the low arts of scheming adventurers, are here the order of the day. The Protestants, if they may be so called, have no church

here ; and Sunday would pass as unnoticed as any other day, were it not called to remembrance by the weekly negro market, and by their barbarous dancing and singing in the evening. Instead of turning the attention of the poor negro, on that day, to some idea of God or religion,—instead of expanding his mind, by exercising his reason, they rather endeavour, if possible, to make him more brutish and sensual. The man who fulfils the duties of life with propriety, and lives in the fear of God, in such a scene, is a rare character. Every thing here tends to debase the mind, to corrupt the feelings, and to eradicate every moral principle.”

Soon after writing this letter, death terminated his short, but useful and honourable career. We now quote the words of his brother Henry :—

“ It pleased God (he says) to take him from a scene thus painful to him, not by his return to Britain, but by his removal to an eternal home. At the commencement of the sickly season, the yellow fever appeared among the troops in great violence ; and many of the men, and also of the officers, were its victims. He was seized with it in the discharge of his duty, and used every method to arrest its progress, but in vain. So rapid is the course of that disease, that in a few hours the freshest countenance is changed, and the most vigorous constitution prostrated for the grave. To have his course terminated, while it was thus conducting him to wealth and distinction, and to be in a strange land, neither tended by a mother’s care nor soothed by a father’s prayers, was indeed trying to nature ; yet did he bow in submission to the will of heaven, and display a patience and a courage worthy of his principles and his character. Endeared to the soldiers by his skill and activity, by his unwearying attention, and his generous risking of his own life to preserve theirs, they lamented his death as the greatest calamity ; and the manner in which his brother officers condoled with his afflicted friends, is alike honourable to their own feelings and to his worth. ‘ Your son,’ says one of them, ‘ during his short illness of two days, received every attention that his situation would admit of, and was followed to his grave by his brother officers with sincere regret.’ ‘ His loss will be an irreparable one,’ says another, ‘ to the 45th

regiment, not only as a professional man, but as a man universally esteemed for his great accomplishments, indefatigable attention, and respectable conduct.' His commander and friend, Colonel Abercrombie, thus writes :—' I most sincerely lament the death of your son. His character was such, in every particular, as to claim most justly the friendship of those who had the pleasure of being acquainted with him. In him I have to regret the loss of a valuable friend ; but much do I feel for a father who is deprived of a son possessed of such qualities as his.'

" It is impossible (continues Henry) to describe the grief of his friends under this affecting stroke. It was the loss of one who was an ornament to their house, and the extinction of many a fond expectation. There is something peculiarly afflicting in the death of friends at a distance from us, and in being thus denied the opportunity of receiving their last testimonies of affection, and of paying to them the last offices of love. But his relations felt, that thus it had pleased God in his infinite wisdom to order it, in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways, from whose throne of mercy no scene is distant, and from whose eye no grief is hid. They had this consolation, that he died in the scene of duty, that the hand of the Lord was with him, and that he left behind him a most honourable name.

" How strikingly does this sketch show, that every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity. Seldom have prospects been more flattering, or merit more valued, yet their possessor was laid in an early grave. And let none say, that his mountain standeth strong, and that his blossoms are safe. An early grave hath been opened for many on what was thought the scene of absolute safety ; and the worm hath consumed the plant which neither the frost nor the blast was permitted to reach. Let not this discourage the ardour of youth to excel, nor repress their eager exertions for this purpose. In these very exertions there is a pleasure, which more than compensates all the sacrifices which they require, and which gladdens the severest seasons of bodily and intellectual application ; and let it not be said that the mental improvement or the moral culture of such youths is vain. Their course is short, but bright ; and their early fall gives to their character a deeper interest, and sheds over their fate a more impressive admonition."

Mr Belfrage's father, with whom he was so happily associated in the ministry, soon followed his son Andrew to the grave. When he received intelligence of his son's death, he was recovering from a severe attack of illness, by which his constitution was greatly enfeebled. In the shattered state of his frame, the unexpected blow which he received by the communication of such intelligence, must have fallen upon him with peculiar severity. After a respite of a few months, his disorder returned with increased violence. He lingered for some time on the brink of the grave, exhibiting a bright example of faith, and patience, and fortitude, to all around him; and, after a painful struggle, exhausted nature at length sank to rest. He entered into the joy of his Lord on the 14th of May 1798.

His son, Henry, besides the memorial which he published, has left among his manuscripts a full record of the excellencies of this good man; and from this record we shall present our readers with a few extracts, to give them an acquaintance with one of the ablest theologians, and most exemplary ministers, whom the Secession Church has ever produced:—

“His manner as a preacher was chiefly characterized by gravity and simplicity. His style was plain and unadorned. He never sought after any of the embellishment of style, yet his language was never debased by coarseness or vulgarity. His speech and his preaching were not with the enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that his people's faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. There was a rapidity in his utterance that sometimes rendered his pronunciation rather indistinct, and not so intelligible at first to strangers; but those who were accustomed to him for a little, found not the smallest difficulty in following him. When he was in the pulpit, you saw not the affectation and vanity of the fop, but the wisdom and seriousness of the man of God. His heart often melted in the application of his sermons; and with all that simple pathos that seldom fails to win upon the soul, he filled his mouth with arguments to prevail with sinners to be reconciled to God. The profound stillness of his

audience, and the tears which stole down many a cheek, showed the deep interest which these addresses excited.

“Diligence was a quality for which he was eminent as a minister. During the greater part of his ministry, for one half of the year, he gave four discourses to his people on the Sabbath. He visited and examined them regularly once a-year, though it was a numerous congregation, and collected out of seven parishes. In these services he laboured to feed them with knowledge and understanding; and exhorted, and comforted, and charged, every one of them, as a father doth his children, that they should walk worthy of God who had called them into his kingdom and glory. He had weekly meetings, for several years, for young persons of both sexes, that he might teach them the first principles of the oracles of God,—the boys one night, and the girls another; and was at some expense himself in procuring them catechisms, and in making such little presents to them as were likely to engage their good-will, and to stimulate their ardour for improvement. For a great part of his ministry, also, he examined all the communicants once in the two years, directing their attendance in different divisions in the session-house, that he might mark the evidences of their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and might encourage the timid, admonish the careless, and rejoice with the spiritually prosperous. He was peculiarly attentive in calling upon the sick; and not only the sick of his own society, but those of other denominations, who requested his sympathy and prayers.

“Such was the estimation in which he was held by all classes, that there were few in distressing circumstances who did not solicit his visits; and he went with as much readiness to preach Christ, the hope and consolation of Israel, to the poor in their cellars and garrets, as to the wealthiest families. Many miles has he walked every week in this labour of love, to strengthen the weak hands and to confirm the feeble knees. He grudged not his own fatigue. He was willing, gladly, to spend and to be spent for his people. Let the malady be ever so loathsome or infectious, or the sufferer ever so worthless, he resisted not the call to see them, trusting for protection to Him who surrounds us with his favour in the path of duty, and eager to pluck the brand from the burning. Where charity was needed, out of his little

he always gave something. Oft was he raised from sleep to go to minister in the house of affliction, and went without a murmur, however early the hour, and however inclement the season. To the fatherless and the orphan he approved himself a counsellor, a guardian, and a friend; and not unfrequently have I heard from such persons, his care of their youth mentioned in the language of melting gratitude.

“ Amid his public avocations he neglected not preparation in private for his official duties. He seldom went to the pulpit without full and accurate study of his subject. To some it may appear incredible how all this could be done. I must state, that excepting a few months after his ordination at Falkirk, when he was afflicted with an ague, he enjoyed the firmest good health. He had a vigorous constitution, and could bear a degree of fatigue under which multitudes would have sunk. In going, when a student, to the West Highlands, to his pupils, he rode in one day from Stirling to Inverary; and when he attended the meetings of Presbytery at Glasgow, he left home in the morning, and was there early in the forenoon. Never did he, in the course of his ministry, decline going out to any diet of official duty, which he had intimated, on account of the badness of the weather. He was also an early riser. In the coldest season of the year, he devoted several hours in the morning to reading and meditation; and when not called from home, a great part of the day was spent in the same manner.

“ The influence of such a minister’s labours must have been very considerable. On this point I can speak with certainty. Oft have I seen the tear start in the eye when his texts were repeated in conversation. Oft have I heard from the bed of affliction and death, blessings invoked on his memory, as the father who had begotten them to God, through the Gospel; as the counsellor who had guided them through perplexities and trials; as the comforter whose soothing words had, in the hour of sorrow, put gladness into their hearts. Years have now elapsed since his death: yet I often hear his sentiments quoted, his services acknowledged, and his loss deplored. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. Under his ministry the congregation increased considerably. At his ordination in Falkirk, no seats in the galleries were occupied but the first and second rows; and, in the lower

part of the church, there were many empty pews ; but, in the course of a few years, the whole church was decently filled, and continued to be so.

“ For many years he was a member of the Presbytery of Glasgow ; and, though attendance on their meetings was, by his distance from them, both fatiguing and expensive, he was seldom absent. The candour, the mildness, and wisdom of his speeches, both there and in the Associate Synod, secured to them more general respect, and gave them a more solid influence, than can be obtained by sarcastic witticisms or florid declamation. He was four times Moderator of the Associate Synod. He was appointed, along with the Reverend James Moir of Tarbolton, commissioner to the Associate Synod in Ireland, to cultivate harmony and affection betwixt the two Synods. The remarks which he made on the agricultural, moral, and religious state of Ireland, showed with what attention he had viewed it in his journey ; and were it not foreign to the design of this sketch, their detail would amuse and instruct. He was one of the committee that was appointed to arrange a scheme for the widows of ministers in the Associate Synod, and had many conversations with Dr Webster of Edinburgh respecting it. That great and good man, after having matured a plan of the kind, which has proved such a blessing and honour to the Church of Scotland, was willing to give every assistance in his power to the establishment of a similar measure in our society. It is not very honourable to the society that this scheme was rendered abortive by the opposition given to it by some members of Synod, and by the reluctance manifested by some congregations to collect for it.

“ He was also a member of those committees appointed to draw up a re-exhibition of the Testimony, and to prepare a warning against socinianism. He was a zealous promoter of that reformation of their creed, which, in the year 1795, was proposed in the Associate Synod, namely, making articles of forbearance of the power of the magistrate in matters of religion (as stated in the Confession of Faith), and of the obligations of the covenants on posterity. Few of the older members of Synod took this side. But the sole headship of Christ, and the rights of conscience, he thought were invaded, and he stood boldly up for the proposed improvement, in spite of all the obloquy and menaces of the op-

posite party. Let us go on to perfection was his cheering language. Let us be firm. Let us be honest. By his mild and prudent reasonings, and by his explanations, he preserved peace, in a great measure, in his own congregation, and the influence of his name went a great way in keeping down dissensions in the societies around.

“ As a member of political society, the sequestered sphere in which he moved precluded him from much share in the transactions of the day. His behaviour through life was such as became the friend of his country and of mankind. When the spirit was awakened, which, after so long a struggle with avarice and corruption, triumphed in the abolition of the African slave trade, he did what he could to rouse the attention of his people to this national iniquity, and to interest their feelings in the miseries of the slaves. He attended the meetings that were held in Falkirk for petitioning Parliament against the slave trade, and went through the neighbourhood to stir up the people to give their support to the great cause of justice and of love, and carried copies of the petition with him for their subscriptions. Toward the close of his course, the French Revolution took place. He dreaded, from the first irruption of that volcano, that, from the corrupted principles and morals of that people, and from the restlessness and frivolity of their habits, they were not ripe for the enjoyment of rational freedom. The attempts that were made to propagate their principles he zealously opposed. In conversation, and in his public ministry, when he judged it proper, he strongly enforced submission to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake. The sermons that were preached on days of national fasting and thanksgiving were prepared with great care, and showed the Christian and patriot united.”

The closing scene of the life of this good man, is thus described by his son :—

“ In his last illness his thoughts ran much on the agony of the Redeemer, the all-sufficiency of his grace, and the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Often was his pale countenance brightened by the smile of love, and often was the groan suppressed which agony was extorting, that it might not distress his anxious affectionate family. On the day he died, he

could scarcely speak. He had some severe nervous fits, but at intervals expressed his satisfaction at seeing his wife and children beside him. He requested me again and again to pray with him; declared that he left us all on God; and that, as for himself, with eternity before him, Christ was all his hope. Never can I forget the broken faltering voice with which he joined in the psalms that were sung; the solemn adoration, the eager hope which the elevation of his eyes indicated, and that grasp of our hands, which showed to what of earth the departing soul cleaved, and his hope of meeting us in a happier state. Toward the close, the struggle became more mild, and he sank quietly to rest. ‘Mark the perfect, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.’”

Mr Belfrage was deeply affected by the death of his father. He felt that, in having such a friend and counsellor removed from him, he had sustained a loss that was in some respects irreparable. His own feelings, under this afflictive bereavement, will be best described in his own beautiful language. One of the brethren of the presbytery preached for him on the Sabbath after the funeral; and, on the following Sabbath, he himself improved the event in two discourses which he delivered to his people from Zach. i. 5, “Your fathers where are they? and the prophets do they live for ever?” His sermon in the afternoon, he concluded in the following words:—

“The event, which has taken from you a pastor, has wounded me still more severely, and has deprived me of a father and an associate, and a guide in the work of the Gospel. To him I owe more than to any other human being, and I have felt as if my life was bound up in his. For nearly four years we have laboured together in the Gospel, as if we had been animated by one heart and by one soul. The course before me is now lonely and arduous; but I will look to the Almighty as the guide of my youth. I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I feel the impulse of his bright example. The grace which was his support will, I trust, be mine. And encouraging is that attachment of his people, which clung to him with increasing veneration during the whole course of his ministry, which is now blessing his memory, and mingling its tears with those of his family at his grave. ‘I had fainted, un-

less I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation; and, as thou hast called me to enter into the labours of a father now at rest, may I be permitted to bear a part in his final account, and in his rejoicing in the day of Christ over those to whom his ministry hath been blessed, and who shall be his glory and his joy for ever."

Amongst the number of those friends who expressed their sympathy with Mr Belfrage on the death of his father, was Mr Robert Greig, minister at Stichel. He succeeded that venerable man of God, the Rev. George Coventry. His ministerial course was short. After labouring for a few years in the vineyard, he was cut off in the prime of life. Betwixt Mr Belfrage and this amiable youth, a friendship, founded on mutual esteem, had been formed, during the period they were prosecuting their studies; and it continued to be maintained after their ordination, by epistolary correspondence, until a termination was put to it by the early removal of Mr Greig from the scene of his labours. Soon after the death of his father, Mr Belfrage received from his friend the following letter:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Long ere this I should have performed my promise, but I hope that you will not impute it to a want of respect for you, or forgetfulness of a friend whom I have loved, still love, and will, I trust, always regard. The truth is simply this; I meant to have written you some time ago, but seeing an account in the papers of the death of your venerable father, I thought it best to delay a while, till the natural expressions of grief were beginning to subside, and to be succeeded by a calm contemplation of his virtues, and by steady resolutions to imitate them. I need not attempt to unfold to you those sources of consolation which your own discernment must already have discovered. You well know, that a life virtuously and usefully spent, marks the heirs of eternal life, and is the pledge of a happy immortality: such was the life of your father. I need say no more; he was too respectable to be exalted by my encomiums. Sorrow not, then, as those who have no hope; but follow his

footsteps, and in due time you also shall arrive at those regions whither he has gone, and you shall live with him, never to be separated.

“ I hope your situation, as a minister, is happy. Mine here is tolerable. We have nearly 500 communicants. I am getting a new house built for me ; the situation is pleasant. I have, however, but little society ; perhaps, so much the better, as I am less exposed. I may say with Doddridge, that I am master of my time, of some books, and (I wish I could add with him) master of myself. Since our being together at the Hall, we have had little opportunity of enjoying a friendly converse. What would you think of going over to Fife at the Synod ? You would see your friends, and I would see mine ; we might spend a few days agreeably together. I would wish you to write me soon, at least within a fortnight. Send me all your news. With compliments to your mother and sisters, and wishes for your welfare, I subscribe myself still,—Your sincere friend,

“ ROBT. GREIG.

“ *Stitchel, 6th August 1798.*”

We insert another of Mr Greig’s letters, as a memorial of the friendship which he cherished toward the subject of this memoir,—a friendship which, though it was not destined to be of long continuance upon earth, we have reason to believe has been ere now renewed in that better world, where no separation of friends ever takes place :—

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I sit down to begin my letter, as usual, with an apology for having delayed so long to write to you. I need not say, that owing to the multiplicity of my engagements, I have little time. Such an excuse is an insult to friendship. I will frankly acknowledge, that no such cause has occasioned the delay,—but pride, blended with indolence ; the one prompting me not to send you a letter unless it was a good one, and the other hindering me from making the exertion ; but friendship and a sense of honour have at length overcome both. I have at length resolved to send you this, not as a display of talents worthy of you, but as a proof of my esteem and regard. If frequent epistolary correspondence were essential to the nature of friendship, I am certain that my letters to you would have

been more frequent ; for neither time, distance, avocations, joys, nor sorrows, have estranged my affections. I still remember the friend of my youth ; and it is sometimes a source of discontent, in my peevish moments, that I am so far separated from you ; but the great Ruler of all things disposes of our lot, not as we wish, but as he wills ; and we ought to be resigned. If we ever think justly of ourselves, we must remember that we live not for ourselves, but for the purposes of Him who made us ; and happy will it be for us, if we live and act in the firm faith of this important truth. Our duty would then be always our pleasure, and the joys and sorrows of life would less affect our minds. I would fondly hope, that since I commenced my ministry, I have not been altogether without the influence of this principle, as a source of consolation under the various trials to which I have been exposed. Among these I rank, as the chief, that dark and turbulent spirit of the Judaizing Christians, with which I have had to contend. But I have laid it down as a principle, to act in this matter from a sense of duty ; and from this line of conduct the venom of malice and the fury of fanaticism could never make me deviate. The storm has now blown over ; for the party never were formidable from their number, but from their rage (being only about twenty-five) ; and notwithstanding of the attempt which they have lately made, to erect their standard in a distant wing of our congregation, namely, at Greenlaw, about six miles from Stichel, they have little hopes of success even there, where the parish minister is very unpopular. At first they had tolerable audiences, but they gradually dwindled away ; and S——, who used to come one Sabbath every month, has not been there these two months. Our meeting is always well filled, and the congregation, in these unstable times, have behaved to me with more affection and respect than I deserve.

“ You will have heard ere this time of the death of Mr Bell, at Wooler. His character could only be known to you by fame ; but to me who knew him well, his memory will ever be dear. For diligence and piety, and every thing connected with his office, he has left behind him few members of Synod who surpassed him ; and for amiable simplicity of manners he was equalled by few. May we, from his example, learn righteousness ! And, from his

sudden removal, be taught to improve our time and talents, as those that must shortly give an account.

“ May I hope to hear from you soon? Do write me: I shall not be so long in answering your next. Present my respects to your mother and sisters. When you see Mr Gilfillan, give him my respects. I have his fine pleasant countenance, an index of his benevolent mind, present to my imagination; and you may rest assured, that your image is seldom absent from the mind of him who always wishes to be reckoned your sincere friend,

“ ROBT. GREIG.

“ *Stitchel, 18th December 1800.*”

After the death of his father, the sole charge of the congregation devolved upon Mr Belfrage. By the removal of his revered colleague, both his responsibility and his labours were increased. The excellent example of ministerial diligence and fidelity, which had been exhibited to him in the life of his father, he endeavoured to imitate. Never did a minister devote himself more thoroughly to the service of his Divine Master. The spiritual improvement of his flock was an object which he laboured incessantly to promote. All his pursuits were rendered subservient to the accomplishment of it. He did not rest satisfied with the ordinary routine of ministerial duty, but he was frequently revolving in his mind some plan, whereby his usefulness as a minister might be increased. He grudged no extra service, either in public or in private, that might be for the benefit of his people. He was instant in season and out of season; and he had the happiness of seeing his labours crowned with a considerable measure of success. His congregation steadily increased, and their young pastor was the object at once of their veneration and affection. While he rejoiced in their external prosperity, his heart was every now and then gladdened by pleasing instances of spiritual fruit reaped in the vineyard of his Master.

During the years 1801–2, the state of the Miles' Lane congregation, London, was such as to render it necessary for the Associate Synod to send them a regular supply of ministers from Scotland. Mr Belfrage was one of those whom the

Synod appointed to officiate in Miles' Lane. The following extract from a letter, which he received about this time from the late Dr Husband of Dunfermline, will show what those circumstances were, connected with the congregation, which rendered such a supply necessary. The letter is dated 27th January 1801. At the time it was written, Dr Husband was himself in London, supplying Miles' Lane. He says:—

“ I presume you are acquainted with the occasion of my being in London. Mr Easton, for some time past, has been unable to discharge the duties of his office ; in consequence of which, his congregation was dwindling so fast, that, without immediate assistance, it must have expired. Whether it will be yet preserved, I know not. There are several causes which operate against it. Under the blessing of Providence, however, I would indulge favourable expectations. There is a number of people still connected with it, who are warmly attached to the Secession, and who, I am persuaded, will not soon fall from their steadfastness. But dissenting congregations in London are, from various causes, more precarious than in Scotland.”

Previous to setting out for the British Metropolis, Mr Belfrage wrote to his friend in Dunfermline, requesting him to give him such directions as might be of use to him on his journey, and during his temporary abode in London. In reply to his communication, his friend thus writes:—

“ *Dunfermline, 15th January 1802.*—When I talked of giving you directions with regard to your journey to London, and your residence there, I did not mean that I had any directions to give, worthy of being put on paper, but only to hold out an inducement to you to come to Dunfermline, where it would have given me real pleasure to have seen you, and to have said any thing on the subject that might have occurred. As to your conduct in London, I know your prudence so well, that I can, with confidence, leave you to your own discretion. You will soon learn the state of the congregation, which has probably undergone a considerable alteration during the last twelve months. Your greatest difficulty, it is likely, will arise from a diversity of opinion respecting Mr Easton ;

but as I know very little about the present state of the congregation, I could write little or nothing but general maxims of prudence, with which you are fully as well acquainted as myself. I beg you will remember me to Mr Waugh, to my worthy host and hostess Mr and Mrs D., to the elders of Miles' Lane, and all inquiring friends. May your mission be attended with much success! May you be under the care of Providence during your absence, and be restored a greater blessing than ever to your friends and congregation!—I remain, yours affectionately,

“ JAMES HUSBAND.”

Mr Belfrage paid his first visit to London in the spring of 1802, and continued there till near the end of May. His labours were highly prized, not only by the congregation of Miles' Lane, but by the religious public in general. During the short period of his visit, the congregation gradually increased, and before the term of his mission expired, he had the pleasure of seeing the chapel occupied by a large and respectable audience. His popular talents, as a preacher, combined with his dignified and prepossessing appearance, rendered him a peculiar favourite in the pulpit, while the urbanity of his manners, and the suavity and cheerfulness of his disposition, made him a welcome guest in the social circle. A few of the letters which he wrote to his friends in Scotland, at this period, giving an account of some of the scenes which he witnessed in London, have been preserved. They express a strong feeling of gratitude, on account of the kindness which he experienced, during his temporary sojourn in the south; and they breathe a warm attachment to home. The perusal of them will be gratifying to our readers. To his mother, to whom he was fondly attached, he writes in the following strain:—

London, March 22. 1802.

“ MY DEAR MOTHER.—I was so happy to hear from home of your welfare; and that all things continue to prosper, is a great ground of thankfulness. I wish to be grateful to God for the health I enjoy here, and for the attention that is shown me. I wish it may please God, by my ministrations here, not only to

increase the congregation in numbers, but to promote their spiritual improvement. There are many religious people here whose society is very pleasant. If some of the congregation here shall owe their conversion to my humble labours, as the instrument, what a rejoicing will it be at the judgment seat of Christ. I hope there are not a few in Falkirk to whose souls my ministry has been blessed; and, far distant as I am from them, my prayer to God, and my heart's desire for them all is, that they may be saved. I wrote William a sketch of my transactions of the last week. On Monday I dined with Mr Waugh. On Tuesday I dined in your old friend's, Captain R——. Dr Hunter, the famous clergyman, who came from South Leith here, and is the captain's minister, dined with us. He is now a man above sixty years of age, but wonderfully frank and courteous in his manners. He and I turned so gracious, that he pressed me to come and see him, and to preach for him on Friday next, on which day they have a sermon before their Sacrament. This, however, I declined; but promised to call for him. He is acquainted with the first people in town; and I am informed that his eloquence and ability, as a preacher, are quite unimpaired.

“ On Thursday, Rowland Hill preached a charity sermon for schools, where fifty boys and fifty girls are maintained and educated. The meeting-house in Miles' Lane was asked and given. The text was, Titus, 2d chapter and 14th verse; he said a number of good things. The children were in the church, and some questions in the Proof Catechism were asked at some of them, at the close of the sermon, which they answered most excellently. Mr Waugh and I were asked to dine with the society, in the London Tavern, a most splendid room. The dinner was excellent. About 130 sat down to it. A great number of ministers was there, of all persuasions. The children came in after dinner; the boys on the one side, and the girls on the other. They were all orphans; as pretty looking children as I ever saw; they were so well dressed and clean, with a sprig of boxwood in their breast. Mr Hill said some serious things to them. He was much affected; mentioned to them that the grace of God took possession of his heart, when he was a boy at school; spoke of the regards of Christ to little children; of the gratitude they ought to feel to their earthly benefactors, and the way they should show

it, and how they ought to act to Him, who is the father of the fatherless. A Dr Rippon who was there that day, showed us three pieces of paper, containing specimens of Bunyan's handwriting, Dr Owen's, and Bradbury's. He is writing a history of Bunhill-fields Churchyard, and memoirs of the ministers that are buried there. I went on Friday to see that churchyard. The Greyfriars' in Edinburgh, is nothing to it. It consists of five acres of ground; the stones stand in regular rows, and there is a number of trees in it. No family has more than one grave in it, but they are made fourteen feet deep, and they lay one above another. The sexton told me that 40,000 had been buried during the last century in it, and that it had been much increased of late. There would be much more this one. I could not find out Mr Hall's grave. Mr A. Hastie was buried last Friday. Death has made dreadful havoc in that family of late. He had been very wild in his behaviour; but, in the progress of his consumption, he became quite serious; and, in his last moments, uttered to his brother the most melting expressions of penitential sorrow, and expressed his firm dependance on the blood of Christ! O how abundant is the grace of our God! O how rich is the mercy of our Saviour! Mr Waugh was to have been here this forenoon, but the heavy rains have detained him. His company is a high treat to me; and, to share his friendship, I count a high honour. He is loved by all that know him, with the utmost warmth. He is to take me to St. James' on Wednesday, when the King has a levee, that I may see him. The kindness of the people of London, and my knowing them better, makes me feel more agreeably than I did the first week; but not all the bustle and splendour, and attractions of London, can make me forget my dear friends at home. I bless God for the good news from Falkirk. In these I discover an answer to my earnest prayers for the congregation's peace, and the family's comfort and happiness; and believe it, my dear mother, that when I see you again, your company, attention, and care, will be prized by me, if possible, more than ever. What a mercy that we hear so often from one another, and that we meet, I trust often, at a throne of grace, in prayer for each other. I am happy that my sisters are enjoying themselves in Edinburgh: remember me to them. You, my dear mother, will be rather solitary at present; but I hope, in the kind attention of your

friends, and especially in the grace of Him whom you have chosen for your refuge and portion in the land of the living, you will find sweet peace and consolation. My love to my sisters; and, with most earnest wishes for your happiness, I am, &c.

To his sister Mary he thus writes:—

“ London, 5th April 1802.

“ MY DEAR MARY.—I received your letter on Wednesday. I was much pleased with it. I had only one fault with it; that was its shortness. I am happy the services of my brethren are so acceptable, and that my people are so affectionate to me, and so steady to their duty. I must now give you the news of last week. I dined again, last Wednesday, with Dr Hunter, in my old friend the captain's, who was hearing me last Sabbath: uncommon attention that family pay me. Dr Hunter seems to be very fond of me: he wishes me to think of settling in London, where a young man of talents, and good behaviour, would be sure to succeed; and promised me every recommendation and countenance in his power. I told him I had too many ties to Falkirk to think of this. On Thursday I was in the Abbey Church of Westminster. I heard one of the prebendaries preach a sermon as void of the Gospel as a page of a heathen moralist. There was not above a dozen of people. There were ten little boys who chaunted the psalms; and their sweet shrill voices, along with the solemn notes of the organ, sounded through the pillars of that venerable building, and had a most sublime effect. They chaunted the prayers, too, quite in the way Mr G—— speaks, when he sings in his application. I never heard this but in this church. I am very much pleased with the attention which many Scotch people pay me. You would be astonished how many come a long way to hear me, and press me to come and see them. Dr Hunter wishes me to dine with the Scottish Corporation this week; the doctor is secretary. The Duke of Montrose is to be in the chair; and two of the King's sons are to be there; and all the Scotch nobility and gentry. It is a society founded for poor Scotsmen in London. Mr Waugh says that the company and entertainment will be splendid beyond any thing I can conceive. I think I will go. Some of my friends have made strong applications to get me admitted to dine with the Whig Club to-morrow,

where I would hear Fox, and other great men speak. Fox has spoken twice, and Pitt once, in the House of Commons, last week. I did not hear them. I was so unlucky as to be engaged both days. A debate is expected this afternoon, when I mean to be there. I mean to go to St James's, on Thursday, to see the drawing-room. I will give you an account of it when I return. On Thursday I am to hear the Bishop of Landaff preach a charity sermon. He is a famous man. It is he who answered Paine's book against the Bible. I am to hear the Bishop of Rochester, a famous prelate also, preach in the Chapel Royal, on Good Friday. I hope to be much gratified. You may tell Betsy I go to see the Archbishop of Canterbury's palace, on Thursday; but whether I see his Grace or not, is another question. The people here are kind and hospitable beyond description. Mr Waugh's company is a feast of itself. I see him often; and get the most affectionate cards and letters from him now and then.

“ Give my love to my sisters, and to my dear and respected mother. May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be present with all your souls, in mercy and love. I hope my sisters will continue to do all they can to make their mother happy. In making her happy, you render yourselves so; and this will be well-pleasing in the sight of that God, who, I trust, cares for our family, and views it with an eye of mercy and affection. I have much satisfaction in hearing from home. The day on which a letter comes to me, is a happy one indeed.”

Another letter to his sister:—

“ London, 13th April 1802.

“ MY DEAR SISTER—I got your kind letter on Wednesday, and was happy to hear that all was so well, and that my sisters were come home. I thought the change would have been beneficial to Betsy. She must be taken out every day this fine weather. I hope, by the time I come home, she will be getting stout. On Monday last I went to hear the great debates in the House of Commons. The gallery, where strangers sit, was crowded an hour before I got there. I went into the House of Lords. I heard Lord Thurlow, Lord Grenville, and the Earl of Carlisle, and some others, speak. Lord Grenville speaks vastly well. On Thursday, I went three miles out of London, to dine in a Mr

Ponton's. I preached in a meeting in the evening ; it is the only place in all the parish of Rotherhithe where the Gospel is preached. It was erected by the zealous exertions of a few serious persons ; they have no minister yet ; they applied to my friend, Mr Ponton, to get me to give a sermon. I preached to them on the thief on the cross. The place is small, but it was nearly full. I left the place amidst the thanks and blessings of the people, and their earnest entreaties for my return. It was a fine evening as we walked home ; and the fine bells of Rotherhithe Church were ringing the most of the way. I went, on Good Friday, to the Chapel Royal at St. James's. I went half an hour before the time, as these places are always crowded when the Bishop preaches. I paid a shilling to get in ; but I could not get a seat, offer never so much ; they were reserved for the nobility, who on these high days attend there. I stood, with about fifty well dressed people, in a passage, the whole time. The service began at twelve, and did not end till a quarter past two. The Bishop of London, who is a thin man, but well looking, read some of the prayers ; and the Bishop of Rochester preached a most learned and ingenious sermon, in explanation of that article of the Creed, which speaks of our Lord's descent into Hell ; it was almost an hour long, and delivered with great force and majesty. The behaviour of the audience was most devout ; they heard, too, with great attention. After the service, I went to Mr Waugh's to dinner. It is as happy a family as I ever saw ; the children are so affectionate in their manners to their parents and to one another, that I was delighted with them. Mr Waugh shines in his family, in the pulpit, and with his friends. Mrs Waugh makes a most excellent wife to him, and an admirable mother to her children ; she is much esteemed and respected. Mr Waugh goes with me to Greenwich and Woolwich, and to Windsor—a charming place ; he says I will be delighted with that jaunt, it is such a beautiful ride to it, and it is a perfect paradise by all accounts. You may judge from these things what a friend he is to me. He and I go to hear the Bishop of Bristol preach a charity sermon on Thursday. The Sacrament is to be dispensed in Miles' Lane, on the second Sabbath of May. I am to be engaged two nights this week examining communicants. As it is the Sabbath before the meeting of the Mis-

sionary Society, we expect Mr Mason to be with us. Yesterday, especially in the afternoon, we had a large and respectable congregation. There are more in it every day; this, I hope, will continue to be the case. E——, poor man, must not come back. Dr Hunter said to me it would be most hurtful to the interest of religion at large; and, from what the people say, it would be ruinous to the congregation; he has been sadly unfortunate, poor man. I was very happy to hear that the congregation near Spitalfields, where Mr Durie has been preaching, wish to join our body, and to have him ordained amongst them. I am very glad of it for Mr Durie's sake; and I think it will make the Secession more known here, and more respectable. Mr and Mrs Ponton came to hear me yesterday. Her mother, old Mrs Smith, a pious good old lady, stays and makes tea to me in the vestry, before the evening sermon. She brings oranges to me, and is uncommonly kind; and her pious conversation pleases me highly. Remember me to all friends. I hope that my mother keeps up her spirits. May the smiles of Heaven constantly gladden her dwelling! and may no plague ever come near it. Give my love to all my sisters, and to my dear and respected mother, on whom I often, often think with the highest esteem and affection. Much as I am caressed in London, and pleased as I am with its various scenes, my heart still points to home. Adieu, my dear sister. May your father's God protect and bless you."

The next letter is to his mother:—

"London, 19th May 1802.

"MY DEAR MOTHER—I received both William's and my sister's letters last night. I was glad to hear all was continuing well at home. I have delayed writing, that I might be able to say certainly when the ship sails. It sails to-morrow. I know several agreeable people who are to come down with it. A gracious providence, I trust, will give us a favourable passage. I am quite anxious now to see Falkirk again. Of all the gay and interesting scenes in which I have mingled here, I have found none that could make me forget my mother's house, her affectionate company and care. I hope God will give me grace to behave as a son ought to do to such a mother.

"Mr Mason still lodges here. He means to take lodgings in

the west end of the town ; but will not do so till I set out. He is a most intelligent man, and makes a very agreeable companion. The Missionary Society met last week. Mason's sermon was excellent, and has been highly admired. The places were crowded, though very large. I prayed, after Mason's sermon, in Tottenham-Court-Road Chapel ; there were about 5000 people present ; the hymns and singing were astonishingly fine. They have appointed me a director of the Missionary Society. I am to be asked to preach one of the sermons next year ; this I would not be very fond of, as the audience is so great. Neither Mr Waugh, Mason, nor I, joined at the sacrament ; our minds were not clear upon that subject. Mason preached in Miles' Lane on Sabbath forenoon, I in the afternoon, when, by the Synod's orders, I preached the church vacant ; and in the evening I preached there too, and took my leave of them. I respect the greater part of them very much, but could by no means think it either honourable or proper to make them believe that I would come to London, if they called me. I am happy among the Falkirk people ; and unless they change very much, I hope still to continue so. I attended a meeting of the dissenting ministers, in and about London, yesterday, when they agreed to address the King about the peace. Mr Waugh is one of the deputation that is to present it ; he is a most loyal man ; I could fill my letter with his praises, and even then, I could not say the half of his excellencies in talent, heart, and conduct. I am a great favourite with his children. I went there last night to take leave of his family ; they were gone to bed before we got there, but they called their mother, and sent her with their best wishes for my safe return to Scotland, and for a happy meeting with my friends. Mr Waugh's second son, William, is coming down with me, to stay some time with us ; he is rather delicate ; it is thought change of air will do him good. I take him over to Kinross with me, to see his brothers. Mrs Waugh hopes every thing from your motherly care and kindness. Last week I saw a number of the ministers from different places ; Bogue, Roby, and Fuller, the baptist—a great man, and many others. There was a pleasant young preacher that prayed at one of the places, in a manner that pleased me much ; it was judicious and fervent ; a very polished, elegant manner he has ; I don't think he

is above twenty-two; he is settled about five miles from London; his name is Collyer. He preached an admirable charity sermon here lately, and presented me with a copy of it. Mr Waugh has presented me with two copies of his sermon, which he preached before the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands of Scotland, and also with his picture, which will well be a memorial of a man I dearly love. The parting with him is the only thing that makes me feel a pang of sorrow in leaving London. I have parted with many good acquaintances, whom I respect, here. Blessed be God, I go to friends whom I love, and who, I am sure, love me. I hope you will feel no anxiety about my voyage down. You will, by prayer and supplication, commit the care of me to that God who claims the sea as his, for he made it, and who is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. I have had much pleasure in writing to you, and hope to have much happiness in your society again. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be exceedingly abundant to you; and may that God who has hitherto marked my life with mercy, continue to do me good, for the sake of his Son, who is all my hope, and in whom I wish to trust living and dying. Remember me in the kindest manner to all that inquire for me. We have often met in the gates of man;—since I left Scotland, we have often met at the Throne of Grace, and we will soon meet at a throne of judgment. May every member of our family and flock be there acknowledged by Christ, as the blessed of his Father, and the beloved of his heart. My best wishes and prayers will ever be for your welfare.—I am, &c.”

Previous to his leaving London, he addressed the following affectionate epistle to his Session:—

“You have heard, I hope with pleasure, that a gracious providence has brought me safe to London, and kept me in health and comfort since my arrival in this place. With much joy have I learned that my congregation has continued in such peace and order in my absence; and I bless God for this, and that the services of my friends and brethren, in preaching the glorious Gospel to them, have given so much satisfaction. I have written the Synod to permit me to return about the middle of May, that we may observe the Lord’s Supper on the first of June, as usual.

I hope they will grant my request, that I may return to my dear flock, and join with them in commemorating the dying love of our Redeemer. May the best blessings of the everlasting covenant be the portion of each of you, and of your respective families: And may grace, mercy, and peace, be ever on my flock, dearly beloved and longed for, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Requesting a continuance of your affection and remembrance, and earnest prayers on my behalf, and hoping, through the mercy of God, to meet you soon in comfort.—
I am, &c.

CHAPTER III.

HIS CORRESPONDENCE FROM 1803 TO 1813.

Affectionate reception by his people. Rev. Dr Waugh. Letters from Dr Waugh. Letters to the same. His mother's death. Memorial of his mother. Rev. Dr Husband. Visit to Lochwinnoch. Attack of illness at Aberdeen. Correspondence about a prisoner in France. Falkirk charity school. Mr Belfrage's efforts to promote its success. Unitarian collection for the school. Collection refused by the managers. Mr Belfrage's letter in the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*. Mr Southwood Smith and the Editor of the *Instructor*.

SHORT though Mr Belfrage's absence had been from his flock, his return was hailed by them with feelings of unfeigned delight. When he alighted from the coach in Falkirk, upwards of a hundred of his people were assembled to give him a cordial welcome. A young friend, who accompanied him from London, wondered when he beheld such a crowd gathered around the coach,—until, upon inquiry, he was delighted to find, that it was the affection of the people to their minister that had drawn them together. Their hearts rejoiced when they beheld their pastor restored to the scene of his accustomed labour; and he experienced no small degree of pleasure, when he found himself once more comfortably seated under the paternal roof, and surrounded by his affectionate charge. His visit to London proved to him a source of the most agreeable reflection. It had introduced him to the acquaintanceship of many excellent persons, both

in the Established Church and among Dissenters. He had seen society under new aspects, and had acquired a more extensive knowledge of the religious world. The magnificent scale on which the public institutions in the British Metropolis were formed; the wealth, the enterprize, and liberality, which he had beheld displayed by British Christians in the service of religion and the cause of humanity, both delighted and astonished him: and he felt a high respect for the character of those eminent and noble-minded men who took the lead in the evangelizing of the heathen, and in every work of beneficence and mercy.

Of the many excellent persons whom he met with in London, and with whose friendship he was honoured, Dr Waugh, minister of the Scotch Secession Church, Well Street, was the one who made the deepest impression upon his heart, and to whom he clung with the warmest affection. Dr Waugh possessed a cultivated understanding, a polished taste, fascinating manners, a large share of philanthropy; and he was thoroughly Scottish in his feelings and habits. He was one of the founders of the London Missionary Society; and was a most active and efficient promoter of those religious institutions which had been formed for diffusing the light of the Gospel, and the blessings of civilization, among the children of men. In him Mr Belfrage found a spirit that was kindred to his own; and betwixt them a friendship was formed, which continued unimpaired during a long course of years, and proved a source of great happiness to both. They maintained frequent correspondence, with one another, by letters. We shall enrich our pages by inserting some of these epistolary communications: they are well worthy of a perusal, on account of their affording an excellent portrait of those mental qualities which distinguished the gifted writers. Those letters which Mr Belfrage wrote in the early part of this correspondence, we are unable to give, as they have not been preserved. The following were amongst the number of those which he received from his valued friend:—

“Salisbury Place, London, 11th June 1802.

“MY DEAR GOOD BROTHER—Receive a father and mother’s best thanks for your care of their son. Give the same to your worthy mother and sisters at home. You must have had a considerable encumbrance in him, especially at the time of the communion ; but it will be of use, in checking the natural overflowings of your benevolent heart, and confining them within the banks of moderation and prudence.

“It will gratify the best dispositions of your heart to be informed, that Mr Mason’s services in Well Street, on the Sabbath after your departure, brought to the widow of my worthy predecessor, thirty-four pounds. Mr J—— did not arrive on the Sabbath following ; but Mr Mason very obligingly came in from Clapham, and preached in the morning in Miles’ Lane, took the whole congregation with him to Artillery Street in the afternoon, and sent them back to their own meeting in the evening, to hear Mr D——.

“In our interview with the King, every thing was gracious on his part ; and, I hope, loyal and dutiful on ours. The sight of the Duke of Portland, as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, in his robes, and of about forty of the leading men, heads of houses in the University, in their ancient dresses, with the ceremonial of their presentation to the King on the throne, within four feet of which Mr Steven and I stood, and also the sight of the University of Cambridge, which came next, were very noble and solemn indeed. The King looked remarkably well ; liker a heathen god, in truth, than a mortal man. We were received in the *closet*, after all was over. Our address, and the King’s answer, you will see in Dr Rippon’s Baptist Register for the 1st June.

“I rejoice in the care of the General Assembly about the parochial schoolmasters, than whom there is not perhaps a more respectable and useful body of men in the kingdom. It will be the disgrace of the ministers, after the augmentations which have been made to their livings, to leave their brethren in the vale of poverty behind them.

“Mr Mason has spent some time, at their own houses, with Messrs Thornton, Wilberforce, Charles Grant, Hardcastle, Cowie, Maitland, and other pious and opulent men, on his plan of esta-

blishing a fund for the support of a divinity teacher in America. Every encouragement, he says, is given to him that he could reasonably expect. He and Mr J—— dined with us on Wednesday ; and spent the evening, with several friends, at Mr Napier's, where he made known his plan, and received between five and ten guineas. The setting of the wheels, as he calls it, a-going here, will prevent him from visiting Paris. A gentleman, who had just returned from that city, was of the company on Wednesday evening, and detailed, at considerable length, the state of religion in France. Mr M. is satisfied, that in less than three months he could not gain any extensive acquaintance with the matter. He goes, therefore, to meet, if possible, the Irish brethren at their Synod ; and from thence to New York, by Greenock.

“ I rejoice to think that the good and sober sense of the Seceders in Scotland, will get the better of the wildfire of the Old Light. Say not a sentence, my dear good Harry, of any civilities shown you here. You paid well for them all, had they been a hundred-fold more.

“ I must *try* to come to a close. All your friends beg to be affectionately remembered to you. The God, whom you serve in the Gospel of his Son, keep his eye upon you, and his hand about you !

“ I remain, with the most grateful sense of your kindness, my dear brother, most affectionately yours,

“ ALEX. WAUGH.”

“ *Salisbury Place, London, 18th June 1802.*

“ I have been tossed about of late, have had much to do, and some things to vex me, so that I have not attended to my duty, perhaps, either to William or you. But there is, and you preach it, pardon to the penitent. I rejoice in the evidences of the divine presence and favour in His ordinances, which you have been enjoying. May our souls become as the season !

“ Mr J—— is acceptable everywhere ; and I find him a social and kind-hearted brother. He preached in Eagle Street, last Wednesday evening, on the compassion of Christ,—a most excellent and consolatory sermon. I exchange with him on Sabbath. Mr Mason goes on, with every prospect of success, in his divinity teacher business. On Monday, I dined with our brethren at

Mr Eadie's, and we did not forget your honour. I took them down with me to the meeting of directors, where we heard an excellent letter read from Captain Wilson, dated 13th March 1802, at sea, east of the Cape, giving an account of the health and settlement of the missionaries at Otaheite. The prospect has never been so fair in that quarter as at present. I mentioned your acceptance of the office of director.

"Give Mrs Waugh's most grateful acknowledgments and mine to your kind and worthy parent. Accept of the same for yourself. No time can efface the impressions of esteem, love, and gratitude, which your conduct has made on my heart. I shall cherish and foster them. I remain, my very dear Harry, most faithfully yours,

ALEX. WAUGH."

"Salisbury Place, London, 27th November 1802.

"Your censure is just: I kiss the rod. Its gentleness goes to my heart, more than if seven thunders of boisterous reproof uttered their voices. Your attention to William, and the motherly care of your dear parent, have laid us under the deepest obligations. Mr N——, indeed, was to have written to her, months ago. But, alas! how much doth a sense of our duty give way to the pressure of this world's business and pursuits! Many thanks for your kind inquiries after William. The change in his health and appearance is truly great.

"Pardon my seeming forgetfulness; for my mind bears record, that your person never presented itself to my view, since you left us, without awakening the purest sentiments of exalted esteem and undissembled affection. But, my dear Harry, if you judge of my regard for you by either the punctuality, the length, or the weight of my scrawls, you will do me wrong.

"The poor folks in Artillery Street, must give up the ghost, *qua congregatio*, at Christmas. Our brother preaches better than ever; but too, too solid, for a London sermon-hunting mob. Miles' Lane people are going on in their usual way. All your friends here are well, and cherish your memory with much cordiality. Mrs Waugh joins in affectionate regards, and much, much gratitude to your dear mother, sisters, and yourself, with, my dearest Harry, your faithful friend,

"ALEX. WAUGH."

“ *Salisbury Place, London, 19th Feb. 1803.*

“ How is it with thee, and with thy dear mother and sisters? William tells me he has sent down a superstitious Episcopalian twelfth cake, with a pack of characters to be drawn for, and sustained for the night, by them, and any of your grave co-presbyters, who may happen to sojourn under your roof. I would not deceive your honest unsuspecting youth. But, solemnly assure you, it is as bad as any of the *five articles of Perth*. However, *Liberari animam meam*, and you take the consequences.

“ I have had a sad fatiguing time of it, since our return from the Continent: much *lee-way* to make up. The visitations, however, are finished now; but a new campaign is opening in purchasing a church in Paris, preparing a selection of sermons for translation, setting the magazine on foot, and a thousand things at home. We have agreed to translate and circulate over the Republic, Mr Brown’s catechism, to be prepared by our brother, Mr Black of Dundee, at whose earnest solicitation the measure has been adopted. * * *

“ Ever, ever, my dear Harry, your most affectionate and faithful friend,
ALEX. WAUGH.”

In the beginning of 1806, Mr Waugh was seized with a lingering and dangerous illness, which threatened to terminate his valuable life. On hearing of his friend’s illness, Mr Belfrage wrote him the following letter:—

“ *Falkirk, 12th March 1806.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I am truly sorry to hear that you have been so poorly this winter. You will believe me, I am sure, when I state, that I take the most sympathizing interest in your distress, and most earnestly wish your speedy restoration to health and usefulness. It is but a fortnight since I heard of your illness, nor did I know its nature till Mr S—— mentioned it to me yesterday, at the meeting of presbytery. Excuse me for hinting this, as I am afraid my not writing you sooner may have led you to think that I take no interest in your situation. Often has my heart glowed at the idea of your worth; at the remembrance of your kindness. While many things about London have vanished from my recollection, you and your family are the objects of my

undiminished esteem and regard. I can scarcely ask you to write me; but I earnestly beg that Thomas, or my old friend William, would let me know, as soon as convenient, how you are. Every day will be tedious to me, until the post shall bring me intelligence respecting a friend so dear. May the consolation you have given to others, in your public and private labours, visit you in the season of confinement and affliction; and may a kind Redeemer support and bless you abundantly.

“ My mother has been very ill this winter. She has had a most severe rheumatic fever, which brought her very low. She is now getting better, and has been out hearing sermon for two Sabbaths past. The distress of friends strengthens all the better feelings of the heart; and, in our sympathy with them, it is soothing to reflect, that we are influenced by a spirit which Jesus exemplified, and which he cannot but approve. May the joy which my mother’s recovery has diffused through our family, be soon imparted to yours, by the establishment of your health. May we be sensible of our obligations to Him who has heard our prayers and seen our tears, and who saves the afflicted that lies low in grief.

“ Farewell, my dear sir, may tranquillity, and patience, and confidence in the care of Heaven, and good hope, through grace, possess your soul.

When Mr Waugh began to recover from his severe illness, it was deemed advisable that he should pay a visit to his native country, for the re-establishment of his health. Mr Belfrage, hearing of his arrival in Scotland, and anxious to repay the kindness which he had experienced from his friend in London, wrote him to the following effect:—

“ *Edinburgh, 20th June 1806.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Having heard of your arrival in Scotland, when I came to Edinburgh yesterday, I take this opportunity of requesting you to come and spend some time with us at Falkirk. Nothing will gratify my mother and sisters more than having it in their power to promote the comfort of one to whom they have been accustomed to look with gratitude and respect. I need not tell you how anxious I myself am to see you. I shall expect

a letter from you in two or three days; and the sooner you can come to me, and the longer you can stay with me, the better. No Sacramental occasion will call me from home for some weeks. If I could be but instrumental, in the smallest degree, to your relief or your happiness, I should esteem it one of the most pleasing circumstances of my life. O! may the Father of mercies support and bless you, my dear friend."

To this kind letter, Mr Belfrage received from his friend the following reply:—

" *Kinross, 8th July 1806.*

" MY DEAR BROTHER,—Many, many and unfeigned thanks for your very affectionate invitation. Gladly would we accept of it, were it in our power. We must, however, be in Edinburgh, the end of next week, to see Dr Gregory, on a complaint in one of the boys' eyes, which rather alarms us; and we propose to bathe for a fortnight at Leith, before I go south to my brother's on Tweedside. I am going to Stirling to-morrow; and, if *at all possible*, I will pay my respects to your worthy parent and sisters, on my return to Dunfermline. But it is so *uncertain*, that you must not lean on me. Give my love and cordial esteem to them. I owe much to them and you for your kindness to William. God bless you, my dear good fellow, and make you a blessing to them who are dear to you, and to thousands besides. Ever and most truly yours.

ALEX. WAUGH.

Mr Belfrage again wrote to his revered friend, renewing his invitation, in the following affectionate terms:—

" *Falkirk, 10th July 1806.*

" MY DEAR SIR,—I am extremely happy to hear that you are deriving so much benefit from your visit to Scotland. We will be extremely mortified, indeed, if we do not see you at Falkirk. Forgive me for urging you to come. My heart is much set on seeing you here. If you find it inconvenient to write me, Mr S—— will, I hope, send me a few lines, to inform me when I may expect you; and I hope that he will come along with you. I can keep myself disengaged every day next week, but Wednesday. I have to preach at Linlithgow on that day; but I can be home

by five o'clock. Remember me, in the kindest manner, to Mrs Waugh, if she is with you. Long, long may you be spared, my dear sir, for the happiness of your family and friends.

" P. S.—You must not forget the remains of antiquity that we have about Falkirk, nor Carron-works, whose wonders have attracted the visits of princes. Your coming, while it will highly gratify us all, will not be without amusement to yourself. Adieu."

Falkirk, 17th July 1806.

" MY DEAR SIR,—I received yours at Linlithgow yesterday. I would most cheerfully have come to Dunfermline to meet with you; but, from various reasons, which it is needless to detail to you, it was out of my power. You mentioned that you were to be at Leith, for a week or two, bathing. Could you not think of coming out, at the end of some week while you are there, and staying with us till Monday. It would be easy for me to prepare beforehand for the Sabbath; and I have some hopes, from what you did at Doune, that you might be able to gratify us with the forenoon's sermon. It would give me the highest happiness to see you both in our house and pulpit. If you should think that preaching twenty minutes would hurt you (for our forenoon's discourse, after the lecture, is never longer), I would not insist upon it. Mr K——, I have no doubt, will give you his gig to bring you and Mrs Waugh to Falkirk. If this plan does not suit you, write me, and I will try to suggest some other. Eager friendship will sharpen the invention of the dullest.

" I am exceedingly glad to hear such favourable accounts of your health. May God continue his kindness to you. It is my most fervent wish, that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers. Write me as soon as you find it convenient. Wishing you every blessing from the All-wise Father, who chastens whom he loves, I am," &c.

About two years after this period, Mr Belfrage was called upon to sustain a severe domestic affliction, in the unexpected removal of his mother from this earthly scene. The messenger of death came to her in the form of a paralytic stroke, and found her on her knees before the throne of grace. She survived the shock only for a few hours, when her sainted

spirit, released from its clayey tabernacle, winged its flight to glory.* Though Mr Belfrage, and the other members of the family, felt severely the stroke that was thus inflicted on them by the rod of the Almighty, yet they were not permitted to sorrow as those who have no hope. They enjoyed sweet consolation under this unexpected bereavement. Their departed friend had long lived in close communion with God ; and it was while she was engaged in the very act of holding fellowship with her heavenly Father, that the angel of mercy was sent to conduct her to her mansion of bliss. In a letter, which Mr Belfrage wrote soon after the death of his mother, to an intimate friend, he thus describes the circumstances in which this afflictive event took place, and the painful feelings which it produced :—

“ Falkirk, 24th November 1808.

“ It is with a heart agitated and overwhelmed with sorrow, that I now write you. My mother, whose health, for some time past, has been wonderfully good, was, on Monday night, at a little past nine, struck with a fatal palsy ; and, at eleven, breathed her last. It was while she was engaged in her evening devotions, in her own room, that she was seized, and sunk upon the floor. In a moment we were by her side. Medical aid was immediately got. She was bled and blistered ; but all, alas ! was to no purpose. A dispensation so unexpected and so severe, has shocked us more than I can express. To my mother we were uncommonly attached. Such were the virtues of her character, and such her kindness to us, that we doated on her with a fondness which deems the present separation the most insupportable of calamities. We know that she is gone to the Father, and that we ought to rejoice on this account. But nature shrinks. The heart is rent. Wherever we go, her absence fills every thing with gloom ; and we think how sad and solitary our dwelling must hereafter be without her. We strive to bring our minds to acquiesce in what God has done. We trust that He will be indulgent to our frailty, who knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust ; and we lift our eyes to Him for everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.

* This event took place on the evening of the 21st November 1808.

“ The Lord has tried your family with melancholy breaches, and I am confident that you will take a deep interest in our sorrow. I am much hurried at present, which obliges me to shorten my letter. Pray for us, my dear friend, that He who hath torn may heal us, and that He who hath smitten may bind us up. Wishing you a course through life marked more and more by usefulness and comfort, I am,” &c.

Soon after the death of his mother, Henry wrote a biographical sketch of her life and character, which was composed by him, not with a view to publication, but to gratify that strong feeling of filial affection, which he cherished in his heart's core, toward her who had given him birth. “ My object,” he says, “ in the composition of it, was to soothe an agitated heart, and to preserve in the family a memorial of excellence, which, by the blessing of Heaven, will teach the cultivation of the purest and most active virtue. The place of her interment rendered it impossible to erect any memorial near her ; but if the conduct of her children be animated by the spirit of their mother, it will maintain a more vivid impression of her excellence, than the best written epitaph. Over this humble memorial, filial piety shall drop many a tear ; and, as it marks the noble qualities which it records, shall exclaim, ‘ *Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.*’ ” From this record, designed by an affectionate son to perpetuate the remembrance of a mother's excellence, we shall extract one or two passages.

Speaking of her ardent and unaffected piety, he says,— “ She feared the Lord from her youth. A considerable part of her time was spent in secret prayer. It was the refuge she fled to in all her afflictions ; nor did she fail, in all the arrangements of her family, to ask the Divine counsel,—or, to use her own emphatic words,—*to lay them all at Christ's feet.* In secret prayer, her mind had frequently uncommon fervour ; and sobs and tears oft conveyed the feelings and wishes to heaven, which could not be uttered. The interest which she took in family worship was uncommon. Never can I forget the earnest attention with which she listened to

the word of God,—the solemnity with which she knelt before Him, and the grave, sweet melody with which she sung His praise. Many as were the cares, and arduous the duties, of a family like hers, yet she was all her life a most punctual attendant upon public worship; and often, when much indisposed, went to hear of God's loving-kindness in the midst of His temple. Her conversation after sermon showed how much she was impressed with what she had heard, and how anxious she was to improve it. When the church dismissed, either forenoon or afternoon, it was her custom, before partaking of any refreshment, to retire for prayer, that the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified, both in herself and others. To a taste that was alive to all that was acceptable in words, she joined a love of solid instruction, and a desire to hear His excellence and grace unfolded whom her soul loved. Oft have her children remarked, in the expression of her countenance, the melting of her heart at the view of the mercy of the Lord Jesus, and the elevation of her soul to Him who was speaking to her from heaven.

“About three years before her death, she had a most severe illness, which lasted several weeks, and from which she recovered very slowly. When she was getting better, but was still very weak, she expressed the greatest anxiety to hear my last sermon on that text, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*. We could not consent to her going out, as it was then most inclement weather. After the church was convened, she muffled herself up, and came in, and sat down in a dark corner, and listened to the grace of the Redeemer, to the penitent believing soul. We knew not this till long afterward, when she told us of the consolation it had given to her mind, and how it strengthened her confidence in the Saviour's compassion. Amid the variety of books that were in the house, the Bible was her chief study. Her delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law did she meditate day and night. The other books that she read were of a serious practical cast. For some time before she

died, she had been employed in reading the works of Traill, Boston, and Doddridge. The "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," was her favourite book.

"In company, she embraced every opportunity of pointing out the importance of eternal things, and checking, with a mildness that gave weight to all she said, that idle frivolity of conversation, by which precious time is wasted, and immortal beings degraded. In the company of the pious, she placed all her delight. However humble their condition, they were welcome to her house, and with them she used to converse about the words of eternal life. She was a most faithful attendant on the diets of examination, which were held every spring in the session-house, and used to take her seat near the door, that the members of the different quarters might get the more comfortable ones; and there she remained till the close of the diet. Oh Jesus! in her was the spirit of the Mary, whose delight in thy word thou didst so warmly extol, and in her it dwelt richly in much wisdom.

"She took an uncommon interest in the beauties of nature. It was the interest not merely of taste, but of piety. She was accustomed to take her children, when young, to a particular spot in a neighbouring wood; and there, seated under the shade of a tree, with a rivulet flowing near her feet, she enjoyed the prattle and the sport of her little ones; while her gratitude, her adoration, and her wishes for their happiness, rose before the throne of the Eternal, mingled with the notes of the birds that sang among the branches. It was her delight, in advanced life, to walk to this spot, and to cherish the tender recollections which it awakened. Often has she, from my window, contemplated, with eager delight, the God of Nature covering the earth with green in the spring,—the luxuriance of our carse fields in summer, and the progress of the harvest. Oft has she gazed on the moon, casting her silver light on the sea. It reminded her of the glowing descriptions, given by my brother Andrew, of the beauty and splendour of the moon in the West Indies; and

she reflected with a sigh, that the moon now shone but on his grave, and that, in the land of ever-during verdure, he was mouldering into dust."

The memory of his mother was fondly cherished by him. He delighted to recal her numerous excellencies. Amongst his papers have been found a number of pious meditations, which were composed by him on the anniversary of her death. As oft as the day revolved, which reminded him of the loss which he had sustained, he devoted part of it to prayer and holy meditation; he noted also upon it the leading events of providence, which had occurred either in his own history, or in the history of his friends, since the preceding anniversary. These effusions of piety and affection, breathe such an excellent spirit, and furnish such a pleasing picture of those devotional habits which pre-eminently distinguished the subject of this memoir, that it has been deemed proper to give them a place in this volume. Instead of inserting them according to the periods when they were written, they are reserved as the ground-work of a separate chapter, designed to illustrate the devotional character of the lamented author.

Some of the letters written to him by his brethren in the ministry, sympathizing with him on the death of his mother, were peculiarly consolatory. He had a heart that was sensitively alive to the soothing voice of friendship. As he delighted to administer comfort to others in the season of their distress, so the language of kindness, addressed to him by those whom he loved, dropped like balm upon his soul in the hour of trial. We shall here insert the letters which he received on this melancholy occasion, from two of his most valued friends. The first was written to him by the Rev. Dr Husband of Dunfermline,—a person who, on account of his distinguished talents, his elegant manners, and genuine piety, occupied a high place amongst the ministers of his day, and betwixt whom and Mr Belfrage, there existed, through life, a friendship, founded on high mutual esteem, and cemented by a long-continued interchange of kindly offices.

“ Dunfermline, 29th November 1808.

“ Last week I received your letter, containing the melancholy intelligence of the death of your worthy mother. Most sincerely do I take part in your sorrows, and in those of the family, on the mournful occasion. I feel as at the loss of a friend whom I much respected and loved. The hospitality and kind attention which I often experienced from her, have left on my mind a pleasing melancholy recollection. I was often a witness of her prudent and active exertions on behalf of her young family, in their early years, and saw the affection and mild dignity with which she conducted herself, both as a wife and as a mother. *Your* loss is great, but *her* gain is unquestionable. She hath entered into her rest, and your sorrow is not on her account, but your own. But your heavenly Father will not leave you comfortless. The promises of His word are a copious source of consolation ; and you know Him who hath said, ‘ I will never leave you, nor forsake you.’ Happy dispensation, however afflicting in its nature, which gives us an impressive view of the vanity of the best earthly enjoyments, and leads us to God himself, as the only good that can never fail us.

“ The situation in which your mother received the summons to depart, is a circumstance on which the mind dwells with pleasure. She was at the gate of heaven, pouring out her heart to Him whom she knew and believed. Are you not ready to wish that the messenger of eternity may find you employed in a similar manner ? Come when he will, may he find us in the way of duty. May the God that comforteth them that are cast down, be the consolation of you.”

The next letter was written to him by his warm-hearted friend, Dr Waugh.*

“ London, 5th January 1809.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,—In sorrow doubly dear, could my sympathy, could my prayers, alleviate the pressure on your ten-

* This letter has already appeared in the Memoir of Dr Waugh, prepared by the Rev. James Hay, and the Rev. Henry Belfrage ; but the excellence of the letter, and the close connection which it has with the subject of this Memoir, entitle it to a place in these pages.

der heart, soon, very soon, should the pressure be alleviated. There is a glorious Personage who hath power with God, who, in all the afflictions of His people, is Himself afflicted. Let your eyes be lifted to Him, let your tears fall at His feet, and, from His intercession, expect present support and future relief.

“ You have now a favourable opportunity of illustrating the power of the Gospel you preach, to strengthen the mind in the deepest distress. Embrace and improve the occasion. The Lord, my dear Henry, is now preparing you for the work of comforting others with the same consolations wherewith you yourself are comforted of God, and fitting you for more extensive usefulness in the house of mourning. In your gentleness of disposition, and in principles far superior to constitutional temperament, your dear sisters will feel ample relief under the severe privation with which the Lord hath visited them. You will all cleave more closely to each other, and your tears will cement the union, which this calamity, in vulgar minds, is frequently found to weaken. I take them to my arms, and I shall not put my name to this scrawl, till I have bowed my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace, in their behalf. They are the children of many prayers, and will have reason, with good Mr Flavel, to bless God for answering a mother’s prayers, many years after her translation to glory. It is not improbable, that the last beat of her devout heart, when smitten on her knees, was an act of fervent supplication on their account.

“ Farewell. Love me, pray for me, write to me ; and believe me to remain ever, ever, my dear Henry, your sympathizing and affectionate friend.”

In the spring of 1810, Mr Belfrage received an invitation from the congregation of Lochwinnoch, to pay them a visit, and dispense the ordinance of the Supper among them. That congregation was one of those which had given him a call at the commencement of his ministry, and they still cherished toward him their first love. Mr Belfrage regarded them as an affectionate and intelligent people, and it gratified him to have an opportunity of giving them a proof of the esteem in which he held them. After the lapse of a number of years,

the people were delighted to see him once more amongst them, and he was no less gratified with the proofs of their affection which he received.

His benevolent disposition was highly gratified, when at any time he had an opportunity afforded him of relieving the distressed, or of exerting himself in the cause of humanity. Frequently were applications made to him, for his friendly offices on behalf of the unfortunate ; and such applications were seldom, if ever, made to him in vain. Like his Divine Master, in whose footsteps he endeavoured habitually to tread, he made it his study to do good. We have a pleasing instance of this in the following communication, addressed by him to Dr Waugh, in answer to the letter of condolence noticed above.

“ Falkirk, 21st June 1810.

“ Your kind and consoling letter was received, by my sisters and me, with the utmost gratitude. The death of my mother was a severe blow to us ; but we have endeavoured to bear, and to improve it, in the manner her example and lessons had taught us. We live in the utmost harmony, and I trust will continue to follow her faith, considering the end of her conversation. I ought to have written you sooner, thanking you for that sympathy of yours, which we so highly value ; but you have so many calls on your attention, that I am reluctant to trouble you. My sentiments of gratitude and warm affection for you and your family, are as strong as ever. I shall carry them to the grave.

“ I have been led to trouble you at this time, in the cause of humanity. One of our people, a James Willis, went to reside in London, about ten years ago, and he and his wife were members of Miles’ Lane Congregation. He went to sea some years ago, from London, and was captured by the French, and has continued a prisoner in France for a long time. He is at present at Auxonne. His wife returned some time ago to Falkirk, and is still here. She got a letter from her husband, a few days since, by one of the persons liberated for extinguishing a fire in the town where they are detained. He appears very anxious about his return. She called on me to-day, and mentioned that a Mr Campbell, of the Transport-Office, a friend of yours, had been useful to her

when she was in London, in recovering some pay of her husband's, and that he had promised to use his influence for his liberation. She begs me to request you to remind him of his promise, and to do what he can to get him exchanged. He was a man of excellent character, and, I believe, a good Christian. In the ship in which he was captured, he was mate ; but, from the captain's having got off, he has been viewed as commander, and is written to as such. His wife has borne her afflictions with much patience. They have not been small. She has had poverty, ill health, hope deferred, and pining anxiety to struggle with. I hope that God is now opening happier prospects to her, and to her companion in tribulation."

Writing to the same, of date 28th August 1810, he says :—

" I feel deeply indebted to you for the trouble you have taken in compliance with my request. With Mr Campbell's spirit and conduct, as displayed in his letters, I am charmed. His active benevolence, his warm sentiments of friendship, and his devout regard to the great Lord of all, have given me a very high idea of his character. Mrs Willis was gratified very much by the efforts that have been made ; and if there were tears of sorrow among those which she shed, there were also some that flowed from gratitude and hope. She showed me a letter, which she had received from her husband. He writes in the spirit of a Christian, and seems to be useful in awakening serious impressions among his countrymen, confined along with him. By family worship, morning and evening, and by reading the Scriptures, with prayer and praise, and exhortation on the Sabbath, he does what he can to make those with whom he is associated wise unto salvation. He was long under the ministry of my father ; and God is calling him to use the talent he acquired here, in a way that may lead us to admire the workings of Providence."

In another letter, written some time after the above, he says :—

" It is at the request of Mrs Willis, one of my congregation,—about whose husband, a prisoner in France, you have kindly interested yourself,—that I now write you. In a letter which she

received from him a few days ago, he mentions that he had written to you, in answer to two letters which he had received from you, and begged you to represent to the Bible Society the want of Bibles among our countrymen, prisoners in France, that a supply might be sent to them. From a letter of the same date with yours, which he says he had sent to herself, not coming to hand, she is afraid that yours may have miscarried also. That our unfortunate countrymen may receive the precious consolation they are sighing for, I beg leave to state to you, that Mr Willis mentions their anxiety about getting the Scriptures, and religious books, as very great. This hint, I know, will induce you to direct the benevolent views of the Society to our countrymen in France : And may the Word of the Lord have free course, and be glorified."

During an excursion, which he made to the north of Scotland, in autumn 1810, he had a severe attack of illness, at Aberdeen. From his friends in that town, he received every attention which kindness could suggest, or hospitality confer. On reaching home, he gave some details of his journey, in a letter addressed to a friend.

" Falkirk, 27th September 1810.

" MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter I received, at Falkirk, yesterday. I was not present at the meeting at D——. It was on Thursday, last week, that I reached home from Aberdeen. I felt myself so weak and languid, as to be quite unfit for to take another journey ; nor could I have enjoyed the party, though I had been present.

" With regard to my jaunt to Aberdeen, I have nothing to communicate of an interesting cast. On the Sabbath evening, as I was finishing the service, I felt much exhausted ; and that night I was seized with violent pains in my stomach and bowels, accompanied with great sickness. On Wednesday I became somewhat easier ; but I was so weak, that I could scarcely walk through the house. I could not leave Aberdeen till the 17th. On our way home, we came to Montrose the first night, and to Dundee the second. It was my wish to come to your house next night, but Mr S. thought our best way was over the hills, from Dunning to

Muckhart. It was dark, and when we came to Dollar, we could get no proper accommodation for ourselves or horses, and had to travel seven miles farther, to Mr T.'s, at M——, a very worthy and hospitable man. Here I remained that night, and got to Falkirk next forenoon. I am not yet so well as I could wish. I was the worse of preaching all day last Sabbath. This week I feel myself growing stronger every day. In a short time, by the care and mercy of God, I hope that I shall return to my usual health and vigour.

“With the country, through which we passed, I was much gratified, especially with the Carse of Gowrie. The people of Aberdeen showed a kind interest in my situation, which I can never forget. Mr Glass is highly respected in Aberdeen; and he well deserves to be so, from his piety, good sense, prudence, and friendly manners. There is nothing very interesting to a stranger at Aberdeen, except the two Colleges. Dr Brown we did not see. His character, I find, has more splendour at a distance than at home. The memory of Campbell is much venerated there. For talents, learning, and diligence, he has seldom been equalled.

“I was sorry that, owing to the time of our jaunt, we missed your Synod sermon. The business of last meeting was not very important, I understand. I respect the feeling which led to your absence from the meeting at D——; and sincerely do I wish, that He who hath torn may heal—that He who hath smitten may bind up.”

A public-spirited individual, connected with the town of Falkirk, having directed his attention to the number of destitute children in that place, who were growing up in ignorance and vice, and having suggested the idea of something being done, in order to train them up in the fear of God, and to render them useful members of society, Mr Belfrage's sympathy was awakened on behalf of these juvenile outcasts, and he eagerly adopted the suggestion, which had been thrown out, of forming a scheme for giving a sound religious education to those poor children, who were either deprived of their parents, or who were altogether neglected by them. He wrote letters to a number of the most influential gentlemen

in the town and neighbourhood, requesting their attendance in his session-house, for the purpose of forming a Charity School for Falkirk. A large and respectable meeting was held for this purpose, on the 14th December 1812, when all present cordially acquiesced in the plan proposed. In the course of a few days, a liberal subscription was made, in order to carry it into effect ; and, early in the spring of the following year, the Falkirk Charity School was opened, with forty scholars on its list. In the course of a year, the number increased to seventy ; and, for the last five or six years, the average number on the list has been about a hundred. The children who attend the Charity School, are assembled on the Sabbath evenings, for religious instruction ; and, in connection with this institution, there is an evening school, during the week, where the girls are taught knitting and sewing.

As Mr Belfrage, on account of the active part which he took in the formation of this useful institution, may be regarded as its founder, so he continued to take a deep interest in its prosperity, so long as he lived. He showed a great concern for the spiritual improvement of the children, and composed a catechism for their use. He was regular in attending the meetings of the Committee of Management, and frequently visited the school on the Sabbath evenings. In one of the meditations which he composed on the anniversary of his mother's death, we find the following notice taken of the formation of this institution :—" This year, I have been honoured to establish a Charity and Sabbath Schools in this place, which are producing the happiest effects on many of the young. Oh ! bless these institutions, more and more, for forming the little children in them to knowledge, virtue, and happiness ; and may this catechism, the address, and prayers that I am printing for their use, contribute to the religious and moral improvement of many. At thy feet, thou Friend of little children, I lay these humble efforts. In thy approbation, I shall have my best reward. Oh ! that

I may be honoured to sow the seeds, from which trees of righteousness shall bud and flourish, when I am withered."

This institution united in its support persons belonging to the different religious denominations in the town. Churchmen and Dissenters co-operated harmoniously in carrying it on. Besides subscriptions and donations, a liberal collection is made every year, in one or other of the churches, for its support. The annual sermon is preached by a minister belonging to the Establishment and Dissenters, alternately. Soon after the commencement of the charity-school, an attempt was made by the Unitarians to establish themselves in Falkirk by means of its popularity. Mr Belfrage exerted himself, with success, to frustrate the attempt. The particulars of this transaction, will be best explained by the following communication, which Mr Belfrage addressed to the Editor of the *Christian Instructor*, under the signature of "A Manager of the Falkirk Charity School :"—

"SIR,—A letter appeared a short time since in the *Edinburgh Star*, reflecting on the managers of the charity school at Falkirk, for refusing to accept of a collection which a Unitarian missionary intended to make for it. On that letter I have made a few observations, to which I request you to give a place in your magazine. For the sake of such of your readers who have not seen it, I think it necessary to state the circumstances which gave rise to it, and to present them with a copy of the letter.

"It was advertised in the *Edinburgh Star*, 'that on Sabbath, the 24th of July, Mr Wright, a missionary from the London Unitarian Fund, would preach in Falkirk, forenoon, afternoon, and evening; and that the proceeds would be given to the charity school at that place.' The managers of the school, who had never been consulted on the matter, judged it necessary to intimate to the public, that this proposal was altogether unauthorized by them, and that they would not accept of any money that might be collected on that occasion. They stated, 'that they could not, in honour and conscience, receive what was to be obtained by the exhibition of tenets, hostile to those principles which they zealously inculcated on the young under their care,

and which they must ever regard as the dearest consolation and hope of their hearts.' A few days after, the following letter appeared in the *Edinburgh Star*:—

“ ‘TO THE EDITORS OF THE *EDINBURGH STAR*.—SIRS,—It is requested that you will have the goodness to insert the following explanation of a circumstance which is noticed in your paper. It had been announced, that Mr Wright, missionary from the London Unitarian Fund, would preach in Falkirk, on Sabbath, July 24, and that the sum collected at the door would be given to the Falkirk Charity School. The managers of this institution deemed it necessary to announce to the inhabitants of Falkirk, that they had made no request of this kind; and have since thought proper to declare to the public, that they would not accept of any money collected on this occasion. It was suggested to Mr Wright by some of his friends in Falkirk, that it might be in his power to contribute something toward the support of a useful institution, and willing to express at least his wish to do so, he permitted his friends to give public intimation of his design, not being in the least aware that it was necessary in Scotland (as in England it is not required), for persons to be of the same religious faith before their offerings of charity can be accepted. That this expression of good will, from a gentleman whose writings in support of our common Christianity are known all over Scotland, and the object of every one of which is to promote the knowledge, or to enforce the practice of religion, should be rejected with horror, while money collected by comedians, under the same roof, is received with gratitude, may proceed, in the managers of the institution, from the very best intention; but does not seem to be the very best indication of their wisdom or piety, their courtesy or candour.—I am, sirs, your very humble servant,

T. SOUTHWOOD SMITH.’

“ The following answer to this letter was not sent to the Editors of the *Star*, though I was perfectly assured of their readiness to insert it, as I did not consider a newspaper a proper place for a discussion of this kind. I have always understood that it was as necessary in England, as in Scotland, that, before a clergyman intimated his intention of preaching for any institution, his services should be requested by its managers, or at least that he should ask and obtain their concurrence. Had Mr Wright made

an offer of his services to the managers of the charity school at Falkirk, it is probable that they would have been declined; yet I am certain this would have been done with such civility and politeness, as would have satisfied him that we were not so deficient in courtesy and candour as Mr Smith supposes.

“It is stated in the letter, that we first announced to the inhabitants of Falkirk, that we had not requested his services, and that we afterwards declared to the public, that we would not accept of any money collected on this occasion. This statement is far from being accurate. I do not say that it was intended; but it is calculated to make the world believe that we did not intimate our refusal of the collection till after it was made; and to lead them to imagine, that it was the smallness of the sum that occasioned our rejection of it. But it is a fact, that when we advertised that Mr Wright’s services were not solicited by us, it was also stated, that the money to be collected would not be received. This was done on the Saturday previous. The notice of this in the newspapers was merely an intimation of what we had done, and it was sent to undeceive those who, in other places, might, from seeing the manner in which a Unitarian’s services were announced, have judged unfavourably of the principles of the friends of this charity school.

“Your readers are requested to observe, that it was not the donation of a private individual that was refused, but the money that might be collected from the inhabitants of Falkirk, by one who came before the public in the character of a Unitarian missionary, and whose avowed object it was, to exhibit, in his sermons, the peculiar tenets of that party. In the letter which has occasioned these remarks, Mr Wright is represented as a supporter of our common Christianity; and his writings are said to have it for their object, to promote the knowledge and the practice of religion. Is not this language adapted to make the ignorant believe, that the differences betwixt us and the Unitarians, as they style themselves, are few and trivial? But how wide is the distinction betwixt those who reject the divinity and the atonement of our Lord with utter contempt, and represent those who worship him as idolaters,—and those who adore him with supreme reverence and affection, and rely on his sacrifice for everlasting felicity! The Christianity of Socinians is Christianity stripped

of its brightest glories ; and their religion frowns on the noblest movements of the human heart.

“ The managers of the school are held up to ridicule, in this letter, for refusing this intended collection, while we received the offerings of comedians with gratitude. This assertion may proceed from a flaming zeal against fashionable amusements, but it is not the very best indication of its writer’s accuracy, nor of his honourable spirit as a disputant. Would the most violent opponent of theatrical entertainments say, that he considered giving countenance to them as equally criminal with encouraging the dissemination of opinions, which he viewed as most degrading to the character of the Redeemer, and ruinous to the souls of men? A candid and charitable mind, instead of upbraiding us with this, would rather have supposed that we were now resolved to receive no money for the support of the school, but from quarters against which no exception could be made. But there is no necessity for resting our defence on either of these grounds, as it is a truth, that, though different companies of comedians have occasionally visited Falkirk, they never gave a farthing to the charity school, nor were their services ever solicited for its support. The only circumstance on which this charge against us rests, is this, and let your readers judge if it warrants it. A few young men, belonging to this place and neighbourhood, acted last winter here, the Gentle Shepherd, and sent three pounds six shillings, as the produce of their efforts, to the charity school. But this was so far from being received with gratitude, that a strong dislike was expressed by some, to the acceptance of it. It may, perhaps, gratify these persons to find, that the disapprobation of theatrical amusements, which has commonly been stigmatized as peculiar to the austerity of Calvinism, has at last found its way among Unitarians ; and that they are now becoming zealous against conformity to the world, in its gaieties and fashions.

“ In the conclusion of the letter, the writer expresses his opinion, that we have not given a very favourable indication of our wisdom and piety, our courtesy and candour. If that be wisdom which puts darkness for light, and light for darkness ; if that be piety, which denies the Lord that bought us ; if that be candour and courtesy, which smiles alike on the votaries of truth and error, and can, with equal readiness, bid both God-speed, we are, and

ever wish to be, strangers to such qualities. The wisdom we wish to pursue, is that which, having proved all things, holds fast that which is good. The piety we love to cherish, is that which honours the Son, even as it honours the Father. The candour and courtesy we are desirous of cultivating, is that which, while it opposes what is wrong, pities those who do the wrong, considers every extenuating circumstance in their case, and labours, in meekness and charity, to reclaim them.

“ I shall suppose that a revolutionary lecturer had made his appearance in Edinburgh a few years ago, and announced his intention of publicly exhibiting the defects of the British constitution, and showing how much more friendly to the improvement, the liberty, and the happiness of this country, a republican form of government would be; and that he had intimated that the money he might collect from his hearers, would be appropriated to the support of some of those institutions for promoting loyalty and patriotism, which were so useful in your city, how would the conductors of these institutions have acted? This comparison is not meant to convey the slightest insinuation against the loyalty of any body of religionists, but to show, that if the rejection of such proffered aid would be deemed a proper mark of consistency and patriotic zeal, they should not be condemned as narrow-minded and uncharitable, who decline the services of those, in support of religious institutions, whom they consider as hostile to the principles which they are intended to support.

“ I request your indulgence a little longer, while I state a circumstance, which will satisfy your readers, that we have been treading in the steps of persons highly respectable in England, which Mr Smith represents as the scene of liberality and candour. A Mr Stone, who was expelled from the rectory of Cold Norton, a few years ago, for preaching a discourse full of Socinian sentiments, made an offer of five pounds, as the profits arising from the publication of two editions of his sermon, toward the support of the fund for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the Essex clergy. The managers of that fund resolved, ‘ that the offers of that blasphemous and heretical sermon be rejected with disdain.’ Wishing your valuable magazine all the success it so well deserves. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

“ A MANAGER OF THE FALKIRK CHARITY SCHOOL.”

Mr Southwood Smith, the Unitarian minister of Carrubber's Close Chapel, Edinburgh, was eager to avail himself of this opportunity of entering into a controversy with the author of the above communication. He sent a reply for insertion in the pages of the Christian Instructor: but the talented editor of that periodical rejected it, on account of the prominent and offensive manner in which the doctrines of Unitarianism were brought forward in it; and, in the following note, he vindicated the part which the managers of the Falkirk Charity School had acted, while he administered castigation to Mr Smith:—

“ Mr Southwood Smith must either be very destitute of sagacity himself, or he must entertain a very low opinion of our sagacity, if he imagines for a moment that we will insert his communication. We do not mean to enter into any controversy with him respecting the transaction at Falkirk; though we say decidedly, that, had the managers of the charity school there received the money collected for their benefit by the Unitarian missionary, they would have acted a part equally criminal and absurd; because they would not only have given countenance to the propagation of most unscriptural and most pernicious doctrine, but would have sanctioned, in the most unequivocal manner, the very means that were employed to counteract and render nugatory their own benevolent labours among the children whom they had taken under their charge. But really if Mr Smith, who has entered as a volunteer into this dispute, thinks that we are to admit into our pages a paper written under the flimsy pretext of merely giving an answer to one of our correspondents on that subject, while it is obviously intended, and directly calculated, to disseminate the mischievous peculiarities of his sect, he has formed an expectation sufficiently insulting indeed, but just as vain as any that ever entered into his mind. His letter that we published was not a *private* letter; it had appeared in the Edinburgh Star, and was actually extracted from that newspaper. And does this circumstance entitle him to insist, that we shall disgrace our pages with his expositions of the Unitarian system, or with his rude attacks on the faith which it is the object of our work to illustrate and defend? Or has he taken it into his head, that we have nothing

else to do than to write confutations of all the crudities that he may be pleased to send us, under the disguise of candid inquiries and honest vindications? We assure him, once for all, that he is quite mistaken ; and, when we notice him, or his coadjutors, in the work of Unitarianism, it must not be in the way of giving circulation to their heresy, but in that of reviewing and criticising the works by which they are so industriously labouring to pervert the Christian world."

The Unitarians do not appear to have made any farther attempt, after this, to establish themselves in Falkirk ; or, if they did, the small encouragement which they met with, soon induced them to desist.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS CORRESPONDENCE FROM 1813 TO HIS SECOND VISIT TO LONDON.

His first publication : Character of it. Letter from Rev. Dr Lawson. Letter from Rev. Dr Husband. Missionary zeal. Rev. Michael Gilfillan of Dunblane. Clerical honour. Enlargement of his church. Second publication. Letters. Practical Catechism. Escape from a foot-pad. His sentiments on the union betwixt the two Secession Synods. Another volume of Addresses. Preaches a funeral discourse for Rev. Dr Husband. Letters from Rev. James Macfarlane. Publishes "Sketches of Life and Character." Monitor to Families. Receives the degree of Doctor in Divinity. Letter from Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart., D. D. Letters from Rev. Dr Waugh. Reply. Second visit to London. Preaches before the London Missionary Society. Letters from London.

HITHERTO the sphere of Mr Belfrages' usefulness had been comparatively circumscribed, being chiefly limited to his own flock and neighbourhood, and to those congregations where he was called upon to assist at sacramental solemnities. But he now began to enlarge his range, by making his appearance as an author. In addition to his varied and arduous labours, as the pastor of a large and increasing congregation, he devoted himself, for a long number of years, to the task of communicating religious instruction to his fellow men from the press ; and, by the number and excellence of his works, he has given himself a claim to the grateful re-

membrance of the religious world. By means of these, “though dead, he yet speaketh.”

It was in 1814, that Mr Belfrage commenced that series of devotional and practical publications, which have procured for him an honourable place in the list of religious writers. These publications, on account of the elegance of their language, the richness of their illustration, and the spirit of piety which they breathe, are eminently fitted to please, to comfort, and to instruct ; and the author, during his lifetime, was amply rewarded for his labours, and was stimulated to persevere in them, by the numerous testimonies which he received, to the excellence and usefulness of his writings, from persons who were well qualified to judge.

The first volume which he presented to the public, consisted wholly of Sacramental Addresses. For this species of writing, he was peculiarly well qualified. In the composition of such addresses, he stands unrivalled. Those who have heard him deliver them to communicants at the Table of the Lord, know how deep and powerful the impression was which he produced. The melting tones of his voice, the earnestness of his manner, the beauty of his language, the variety and suitableness of his illustrations, and the rich vein of Scriptural sentiment flowing, as it were, in one continued stream from the cross, all combined to render these addresses, when delivered, pre-eminently impressive. When presented to the public in a printed form, they were perused with eagerness and delight ; and so favourable was the reception which this volume met with, that the first edition was speedily exhausted.

In one of the Meditations, penned by him on the anniversary of his mother’s death, we find the following reference to the publication of this volume. It marks the habitual piety of the author’s mind :—“ This year I have finished, through Divine help, and published my Sacramental Addresses and Meditations. Blessed be the Lord, who guided me and supported me in that labour, and who has given such a measure of public acceptance to it ! Oh, how my mother

would have delighted in such a publication ! But her glowing devotion contemplates the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as it had been slain. Let my faith anticipate the views of glory, and let my heart glow with a religious affection, increasing in assimilation to hers. It would have gratified me, above all earthly things, to have put this book into her hands. But, O my Saviour, I will lay it at thy feet. Oh, may it minister to the improvement of thy followers, and diffuse the glories of thy name."

The reception which this volume of Addresses met with from the religious public, could not fail to be highly gratifying to the author. With the exception of the catechism, which he had published for the use of the children attending the Charity School, this was his first appearance before the world, as a religious writer. The following opinion, pronounced upon the merits of the volume, by a reviewer in a highly respectable periodical,* may be given as a specimen of the manner in which the work was received by the religious periodical press :—" This volume of Sacramental Addresses is, in our opinion, fitted to be of great use. It shows, to ministers, the diversity of points from which they may advance to conduct the service of the holy communion, and suggests to them the way of finding, without ceasing to be appropriate, that variety of exhibition, which will make the same subject ever new, instructive, and charming. The ardent devotion which breathes in these Meditations, may, through the blessing of Heaven, set the soul of the minister on fire, and send him to break the bread of life to the children of God, with his heart burning in him, and his lips touched with a live-coal from the altar of redeeming love. The devout perusal of these Addresses is calculated also to enlighten the minds, and warm the hearts, of intending communicants, and thus to bring both pastor and people to the communion service, with views and affections happily suited to its exalted nature and design. We think them peculiarly calculated to solemnize the mind before the Majesty of heaven, and to soothe the heart with the kindness

* The Edinburgh Christian Instructor.

of Jehovah's love ; to endear to the soul the blessed Saviour, to the full extent of his character, and work, and will ; to purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness, and to make the observance of the Supper truly the remembrance of Christ, and, at the same time, the communion of saints."

Mr Belfrage received communications from several of his friends in the ministry, expressing their high approbation of his work. We insert the following. The first is from that distinguished ornament of the Secession Church, the Rev. Dr Lawson, Professor of Divinity in connection with the Associate Synod :—

“ Selkirk, April 1814.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your valuable present. I could scarcely have hoped that a whole volume of Table Discourses could have been composed without too many repetitions, or without departing too far from the great subject of meditation presented to us in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. But redemption by Christ, as appears in your book, contains the most powerful motives for every duty of the life of a Christian. It is my wish, that you may always retain a warm feeling of those impressive truths, which you have been taught of God to set forth in the view of other men. I hope many will be much edified by your book. This hope gives more pleasure than the expectation of the highest fame that literary performances can acquire.

“ My family wish you the best of blessings. I am yours affectionately,

“ G. LAWSON.”

The next is from the Rev. Dr Husband, Dunfermline :—

“ Dunfermline, 31st December 1814.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I ought long ere now to have expressed my sincere gratitude for the very acceptable present with which you honoured me.

“ I feel myself restrained, by a very obvious consideration, from expressing to *you*, what I could say with much truth, in approbation of the work with which you have favoured the public. I cannot say less, than that, in my opinion, it abounds with a rich variety of evangelical matter, expressed with much energy, and happily adapted to answer its design of communicating to the

reader that warmth of feeling, which, no one can doubt, guided the pen of the writer. I have read the work with much pleasure myself, and am happy that it engages the attention, and, I hope, interests the hearts, of my family. It is to me no small recommendation of the work, that it is so characteristic, as to have the effect of placing the author before my eyes, and of conveying to my ears the sound of his voice. May the Lord bless it, to the edification of your flock, and of all into whose hands it may fall."

The following extract is from a letter written by the Rev. James Macfarlane, colleague to the Rev. Dr Husband :—

" Your kind favour I received on Monday evening, which I presented to Mrs M., with earnest instructions to careful and repeated perusals. I sincerely wish that she, and all who read your valuable Addresses, may believe the doctrines they so appositely illustrate, imbibe the spirit they so warmly recommend, and reduce to practice the duties they so zealously inculcate."

Mr Belfrage, in common with the ministers and people of the Secession Church, took a deep interest in the success of that magnificent institution, the Bible Society. When an Auxiliary was formed in Stirling, for the county and neighbourhood, he enrolled himself as a member ; and, until the blight came over it, by means of the unhappy Apocryphal controversy, which rent the Auxiliary asunder, he continued one of its warmest and steadiest friends. He contemplated, with a philanthropic mind, the mighty movements that were made by the various missionary institutions that had been formed, in our own and in other lands, for the conversion of the heathen. These institutions had an interest in his prayers, and he contributed liberally for their support. He formed an association in his congregation, which, for a number of years, rendered effective aid to the sacred cause.

A few extracts from the letters written by him, at this period, will show the catholic spirit which he cherished in reference to these institutions ; and the ardour of mind, with which he co-operated, along with his fellow Christians, in giving them support.

To the Reverend Dr Waugh :—

Falkirk, 4th April 1814.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Before I tell you how to dispose of the inclosed draft, I must give you some account of it. I have established an Auxiliary Missionary and Bible Society in my congregation, which has been joined by a few individuals from some of the other societies in Falkirk. It commenced in February 1813. The first half year’s produce of its funds came to L. 32, which we gave to the Stirlingshire Bible Society. The last half year’s produce was found, in the end of last February, to amount to L. 38, 17s. This is the sum in the draft ; and, as it was collected for aiding missionary efforts, we agreed to give Twelve Guineas to the Baptist Missionary Society, and Thirteen Guineas to the Moravian Missionary Society. I have indorsed the draft to you. You will take the trouble of getting the money, and paying the Twelve Guineas to Mr Hardcastle. We have repeatedly aided that society, and they deserve the countenance and gratitude of the Christian world. Be so good as pay the Thirteen Guineas to Mr Latrobe, and express to him the deep interest which I and my friends have taken in their proceedings, and that we will be much gratified by any account of their missions he may think proper to send us. I am peculiarly attached to the Moravian Missionaries, from the self-denial and meekness which, in such an uncommon degree, mingle with their zeal. You will have the goodness to pay the Twelve Guineas to the Baptist Missionary Society. It is intended for the support of their missions in the East, as well as for aiding their translations. The names of the missionaries in the East must be dear to every enlightened friend of literature as well as of religion.

“ Write me as soon as you receive this draft, that I may be sure it has reached you. Write me by post, without waiting for a frank. I hope, my dear sir, that your health and spirits are good this spring. Believe me, I never think of you, but my heart glows.”

To the Reverend Mr C——

Falkirk, 2d March 1815.

“ REV. DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure of your letter, by your mother. I am glad she is now so well, and hope that she will be

long spared in health and comfort. I was gratified to learn that you are somewhat better. I saw Mr Paterson on Tuesday. He is now very weak indeed. He could not speak much, and his voice is feeble ; but there was such good sense, such humility, and pious emotion in what he said, that I was much affected by it. I felt, in leaving him, that I would never see him again in this world. In his lonely case, I saw the care and mercy of a supporting Redeemer.

“ On Monday, our Auxiliary Missionary and Bible Society met here. Our half yearly collection came to L.30. We agreed to give ten to the Moravians, ten to the Baptists, and ten to the London Missionary Society. The meeting was most pleasing. I began with psalms and prayer, and read some interesting extracts from the proceedings of these societies. Two members of the congregation prayed afterward, and twice we joined again in praise ; and, at the close, I gave a short address to them. One of the persons who prayed was a prisoner some years in France ; a truly excellent man. At our next meeting in August, he is, at my request, to give us some account of the state of religion among his fellow prisoners in France.”

In another letter to Dr Waugh, dated 19th April 1817, he says :—

“ Along with this, you will receive a draft for L.9, 10s., for the London Missionary Society, from the Auxiliary Missionary and Bible Society, in my congregation. When the draft is due, you will, I hope, take the trouble of getting the money from the banker, and paying it into the treasurer of your society. The exertions of the London Missionary Society are indeed great ; and I trust that the zeal and liberality of the Christian world will enable them to maintain and extend these, till the time shall come when the example of Ethiopia, in stretching out her hands to God, shall be followed by every heathen tribe, and the salvation of Jesus shall be the joy of the whole earth !”

In the autumn of 1816, he was called upon to perform a melancholy duty, in preaching the funeral sermon of an honoured servant of God, who had long been his own and his father's friend—the Reverend Michael Gilfillan, of Dun-

blane*. He chose for his text, on that occasion, Heb. xiii. 7; “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” The concluding portion of the sermon he published soon after, in the *Christian Repository*, under the title of “A Tribute of Respect and Affection to Departed Worth.”

Writing to a friend on this subject, he says:—“You will, by this time, have seen my humble tribute to departed worth. I did not intend to publish it, when it was prepared for the pulpit; but some of Mr F.’s family wished for copies of it, and others urged me to send it to the *Repository*. It was my wish, in that description of my departed friend, to exhibit the principal features of his character, and the leading events of his life; and, were I to attempt to write a memoir, I would only enlarge a little more on the topics to which I have already adverted. I cannot now think of writing any memoir; and, if any thing of that kind is still wished for, I hope some of the many friends of the excellent man to whom we were so much attached, will engage in it, and finish it in a manner superior to any thing I can pretend to. He will live in our respectful remembrance; and I trust God will give us grace to aid us in our efforts to copy his useful life, his devout habits, his engaging benignity, and exemplary manners. Would you write me soon, and let me know if the friends of Mr Gilfillan about you are still anxious for a memoir, and if this is your own wish; and if Mr Husband and you will undertake it, I shall be happy to furnish you with any anecdotes illustrative of his character, which may be viewed as adapted to such a narrative.”

Such was the attachment of Mr Belfrage to the memory of this good man, that, notwithstanding of the resolution expressed in the extract now given, he did write a sketch of his life and character, some time after this, and published it, along with similar sketches, in a small volume. The title prefixed to the sketch of his friend, was the appropriate one

* This excellent man died suddenly, on the evening of Monday, 16th September 1816, in the 69th year of his age, and 49th of his ministry.

of "A Good Minister." The concluding part of this sketch is instructive; and we deem no apology necessary for giving it a place in the memorial we are now writing. The perusal of it will interest the general reader; and it will recal many pleasing recollections to the minds of those who were acquainted with the excellent individual to whom it refers.— "The last time I saw him (says Mr Belfrage), was at Stirling, in August 1816, to which place he had come to attend the annual meeting of the County Bible Society. He was in his usual health and spirits; and rose to second the motion, 'That the exertions of the British and Foreign Bible Society deserve the gratitude and support of Christians.' I recollect most distinctly, the impressive language in which he spoke of the value of the Bible, and of the obligations which the dying love of Christ laid on us, to devote every power that we had to his glory. It was marked by some of the audience, that his face became pale during the speech, but he finished it without any apparent agitation; and, after he sat down, requested me to go out with him. He left the County Hall, leaning on my arm, and we went into an adjoining apartment, where he sat down sick and faint. After taking a little water, he felt somewhat relieved, and urged me to return to the duties of the meeting, which I did, after seeing him conducted, by a relation, to his dwelling. After the meeting was dismissed, I called on him, and found him in bed, and perfectly tranquil. He said he had been committing his soul to Christ, in whose hands he had often placed it, and that he knew that with him it was safe. It was plain that there was in his constitution a strong tendency to apoplexy; and recourse was had to copious bleeding. He returned to Dunblane, strongly impressed with the idea of his departure being at hand, and said to a friend, 'I am not afraid to die; I know in whom I have believed; I only wish to glorify God on my deathbed.' He soon had symptoms of another attack, which required the application of the lancet again; and, by the loss of so much blood, and the very low diet to which he was reduced, he became very feeble. During the three weeks that elapsed betwixt the first attack and the fatal one, he felt

himself ready to be offered; and his conversation was like that of one on the brink of eternity. When one observed, that his death would be a great loss to the church, ‘Alas!’ said he, ‘I never did any thing to the glory of God, as I should have done; and, if grace had not restrained me, I know not what I might have been. O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? But how comfortable! It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—the chief of sinners!’ Resting himself one day on his bed, he said thrice, with much emphasis, ‘Oh! what a poor creature I am! All my righteousnesses are as filthy rags.’ Such were his impressions of the extent of God’s claims on him, and of his own deficiencies, that he reckoned himself, as Christ enjoins us to do, an unprofitable servant. This humiliation of soul was not associated with despair. Not long before his death, he heard, at the communion, a discourse on that text, Isa. xli. 17, 18; ‘When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them; I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land pools of water.’ During that sermon, his soul had been sweetly solaced, and this soothing promise encouraged him during all his confinement.

“When the idea of recovery was held out to him, he said, ‘Oh, that I may come out of the furnace more purified, and more fitted for the master’s use. I cannot expect to grow in knowledge and gifts now; but if I grow in grace, that is best. All I wish for is, to be more holy, and more active for Christ.’ He gave no indications of solicitude about life, nor did I ever see any one who discovered so little of the fear of death. In various scenes of intercourse with him, I have marked something uncommon in the calmness with which he spoke of death, when the subject was adverted to. Reluctance and timidity to die, he viewed as unbecoming the Christian’s hope, and inconsistent with the love he professed for the

Saviour. There are ties to life, which many good men have, which he had not ; and it had been his long study to subject every feeling to the control of reason, and to the guidance of religious principle. Opportunities of doing good were the only attractions which this earthly scene presented to his mind. In three weeks his strength was in part restored ; and, on the 28th of September, he attended public worship, and was resolved, if Providence permitted him, to preach on the ensuing Sabbath. To the remonstrances of some of his friends against his engaging in public duty, he stated how painful it was to him to remain unemployed ; and the uneasy feelings to which this would have given rise, would have produced a more perilous excitement in his constitution, than a moderate share of official duty could have done. But it was not the purpose of Heaven that he should enter the pulpit or the sanctuary any more. On the Monday, he should have gone to Kinross to meet with some ministers, in an association formed for friendly and improving intercourse. In the annual meetings of that society, he felt a great interest. It was endeared to him by the memory of valued friends that once blessed it, by the company of his younger brethren, to whom he was much attached, and by the information which it elicited, and the kind affections which it cherished. He felt that he could not undertake such a journey, but sent them a message expressive of his kindest regards. Alas ! ere that meeting was dismissed, the mournful intelligence of his death reached them ; and, on the Saturday, they were assembled to convey his body to the grave.

“ He spent that Monday in reading, and prayer, and religious conversation ; and in the evening went out to attend the weekly meeting of the Savings’ Bank. After his return, he called the family for worship ; and, after it was over, conversed a little with his niece, and retired to his apartment, bidding her good night, and wishing her God’s blessing. He read the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians,—for the Bible was found lying on his table, open at that place,—he engaged in secret prayer, and was stepping

into his bed, when a blood-vessel burst in his head. His niece, who was in an adjoining chamber, heard a noise, as of a struggle in the throat for respiration, and ran into the apartment, and, raising him up, asked him about his illness; he gave her a look most expressive of kindness and peace, and immediately expired. A surgeon was instantly sent for; but the moment he saw him, he pronounced that nothing could be done. I never heard of his expressing any wish as to the mode of his decease; he left this, with perfect confidence, in the hands of his Maker; but it would not have been possible for him, had it been left to his choice, to have selected a death more sweetly tranquil. He had not the painful consciousness of fading talents and declining popularity, nor that heart-depressing loneliness sometimes felt and lamented in advanced life; for the vigour of his mind was unimpaired, and he was surrounded by the most gratifying expressions of public respect, and by all the attentions of domestic kindness. And death came to him in its softest form; for in his case there was no protracted suffering, no harassing anxiety, no dark forebodings; but while the glow of prayer was on his heart, he, without pain or struggle, sunk gently into rest. As he had spent much of his time in prayer, and had peculiar delight in this exercise, so to him it was given, when the work of devotion was ended, to ‘gather up his feet into the bed,’ and to yield up the ghost.”

Such was the peaceful termination of the life of one of Mr Belfrage’s most intimate friends; one with whom he had often taken sweet counsel together, and walked in company to the house of God; one whom he loved and venerated as a parent. In one of his Meditations, written soon after the death of this excellent individual, he adverts to his removal in the following terms:—“Thou hast removed, this year, a long and intimate friend of our family, a man eminent for piety and usefulness, one who was the companion of my father, and my own. Thou hast removed him in the same sudden manner as my mother, on the same evening of the week, at the same hour, and when he had just finished the

same devotional exercise, in which my mother was engaged, when the hand of death touched her. O, may I see, in this removal, an additional proof of the Almighty's complacency in praying persons ! May I learn from it, to prepare for a removal as sudden ; and to me may it be as safe and as happy as to them ! O, save from meeting with death in the scene of folly, or with a heart carnal or presumptuous ! O, animate me to the same holy zeal, the same eager devotion, the same superiority to the world, the same purity of thought and affection, the same readiness for the Saviour's coming, and the same labours of mercy and love !"

The office of clerk to the Associate Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk, which Mr Gilfillan had for a long number of years held, Mr Belfrage was now called upon, by the unanimous suffrages of his co-presbyters, to occupy. In a letter to a friend, he makes the following playful allusion to the clerical honour thus conferred upon him :—" The office of clerk in our Presbytery is, I am sorry to say, fit only for a rich man to hold. If I may judge from the postages, since I was invested with it, I will have the pleasure of devoting some money of my own, beside my labour, to the public good."

The increase of his congregation rendered it necessary that his church should be enlarged. In one of his letters, he says :—" Our congregation have got estimates, last Thursday, for the alterations in our church. It is to be entirely new, except a part of the gables ; and will be done, according to the lowest estimate, for about L.1000. The roof and seats are as good as new, and will, in some way, be employed again. We are to have 300 more seats, and the communion tables much enlarged. Subscription papers are going through the congregation at present, and if the sum obtained is any way respectable, the work will be commenced in spring."

In another letter, dated 16th March 1817, he says :—" The foundation-stone of our new church was laid on Wednesday, last week. I put into a bottle, which was laid in the foundation, a piece of parchment, containing a short ac-

count of the congregation and its ministers. I put also a few coins, and a newspaper. We had no procession; but I hope there have been prayers in secret, that the Lord may prosper the undertaking for his glory, and the good of all concerned." After the rebuilding of the church was completed, he recorded, in one of his devout Meditations, the following grateful acknowledgement of God's goodness:—"This year our church has been rebuilt and finished in a manner commodious and elegant; and, blessed be God, it has been completed without the smallest injury to any individual,—and, though considerably enlarged, it is well filled. Blessed be God, that, during the time we worshipped without, we had so many good days in an unfavourable season; and that the rains, which sometimes descended, were so moderate, that none were injured in their health by the weather, and that it was often felt by not a few, 'It is good for us to be here.' Blessed be the Lord, we are, on Sabbath next, to observe the Lord's Supper in it,—that feast of dedication: May God fill it with glory, and render this first Sacrament a token for good, and a pledge of heaven. This is the third time I have seen it altered and enlarged, and it is probably the last; and when it is again touched, I shall be dust. O, may I serve thee in it, with my spirit, in the Gospel of thy Son; and when I leave its pulpit (erected for me as an expression of respect), to be occupied by another, may it be with the full proof of my ministry, and with the joyful hope of the Gospel!"

In 1817, he again made his appearance as an author, by publishing "Practical Discourses, intended to promote the Happiness and Improvement of the Young." These discourses were preached by him to the young under his pastoral care; and he was induced to publish them, by the hope, "that their practical counsels thus remaining, might be useful long after the admonitions of the pulpit should be forgotten." In one of his letters, he expresses the following benevolent wish in reference to this publication:—"It would gratify me, if there was a society for orphans established, to

which I might devote any profits that might arise from this little work." This volume met with a reception from the public equally favourable as the former, and a demand was speedily made for a second edition.

A copy of his work having been forwarded to the Rev. Dr Waugh, he received from his friend the following letter, acknowledging the favour:—

"Salisbury Place, London, 29th November 1817.

"MY DEAR HARRY,—I fear it will require all your candour and charity, great as they confessedly are, to place me at that point, in the scale of your estimation, where I wish ever to stand. All the apology for my long silence, that, in truth, I can offer, is this, that I have, somehow or other, suffered myself to be involved and entangled in such a variety and perplexity of engagements, as to put it out of my power to attend, as I ought, not only to the claims of friendship and love, but, I fear, to the sacred duties I owe to my family and church.

"The acceptance which your first volume deservedly received from the public, is the best recommendation of the second; and, therefore, rendered it unnecessary to say much, on its internal merits, in the notice taken of it, in the last number of the magazine. My own young folks are reading it with delight, and I hope spiritual profit. Go on, my dear brother. Work; O! work while it is day. Age is dark and unlovely. I feel it to be so. For a fortnight I have been confined, unable to move but in a coach, by this sad complaint. Love to your dear sisters. W—— has not forgotten their hospitable attentions to him. The communion was in Miles' Lane last Sabbath. Peace and love, in high tone, in the three congregations.

"Poor D——, of N——! My heart bleeds for him. Are his people able, and disposed, to make his bed in his sickness? Could any thing, in the way of relief and succour, be privately done? If so, put me down for a guinea. We feel the pressure in my little circle beyond all former example of suffering; but I would stir in his behalf.

"When you can snatch half an hour from more important work, indulge me with a few lines. It is really a charity.—Ever, and most affectionately, yours."

After a short interval, Mr Belfrage wrote the following to Dr Waugh:—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I was favoured with your letter in the beginning of December, and I need not say how much my sisters and I were gratified by your kind remembrance of us. You have laid me under additional obligations to your friendship, by the review in the Evangelical Magazine, which has been of material service in circulating my little work. That I have been honoured by your regard, and that any production of mine has been deemed worthy of your praise, will ever, I trust, be remembered and improved by me as it ought. The second edition of the Discourses is in the press, and will be out in a fortnight.

“I wish that I could persuade you to favour the world with some of your sermons. To your people the volume would be most precious; and while it would enlighten and impress all who read it, your numerous friends would regard it as the memorial of sentiments and feelings which have delighted and melted their hearts. I hope Providence will give you leisure for this labour of love, by fixing your son with you in the work of the Gospel. In such a connection I must feel a deep interest; and if God shall so order it, your son will, I hope, be as happy with his father as I was with mine.

“We have been preaching through the winter in our new church. It was rebuilt last season, and is so much enlarged, that we have got 300 more seats. It is an elegant and commodious place of worship; and in consequence of a private subscription, among a few of the families in the congregation, a pulpit has been erected in it which is very splendid. This was a scheme of the young, to show their regard for me, and, in this view of it, must give pleasure.

“We have little ecclesiastical news that would interest you. Our Presbytery meets at Dunblane, on Wednesday next, to ordain Mr. A——, who, I hope, will fill, with credit, the station long occupied by our venerable and lamented friend. I have been surprised that no memoir of him has appeared in the Evangelical Magazine; and certainly his enlightened piety, his active and well-directed zeal for the glory of God and the good of his fellow-creatures, and his cheerfulness, prudence, intelligence, and

modesty, might be useful, in no small degree, if properly exhibited, to improve the religious character of the professed friends of the Gospel.

“ We have had two very interesting deaths this winter among the young. The first was a lad of nineteen, who died of a short illness. He was so remarkable for the sweetness of his temper, that his father told me he never saw him in a passion ; and such was his delight in the Scripture and in secret prayer, that when he came in from his work to his meals, he was eager to snatch a few minutes for the private exercises of devotion.

“ The other was a young girl of sixteen, who was confined to her bed for several months ; and, in her, patience had its perfect work. So far from requiring consolation from her friends, she was their comforter, by her pious sentiments, and that good hope, through grace, that was the support of her heart. To her death had no terrors. The love of Christ, in dying for sinners, was the constant subject of her thoughts ; and she was heard to say, a little before she expired, that, through grace, she was an heir of heaven. It is delightful to think, that the Lord is giving testimony to the word of his grace.

“ I delayed writing you till this time, under the idea that I might have a draft for the London Missionary Society to send ; but the Edinburgh Missionary Society have so urgently claimed the support of the friends of the Gospel in Scotland, at this time, that our people wished their mite to be given to them. On another occasion we shall renew our remembrance of you.

“ My sisters join me in best wishes to Mrs Waugh and the family, and to my friend W—— and his lady. It would give us the highest pleasure to see you again in Scotland. Knowing what claims are made upon your time, I cannot expect to hear from you often,—but, do not forget me ; and believe me to be, with the most earnest wishes for your health and comfort, yours most affectionately.”

During the winter of 1818, he prepared and published a Practical Catechism, intended to exhibit the leading facts and principles of Christianity, in connexion with their moral influence ; to which he added an address to children, and some prayers to guide the devotions of the young. This

catechism was prepared by him for some classes of boys and girls, which he established in his congregation, and which he was anxious to train to the obedience of the faith. In one of his Meditations, referring to these classes, which he had lately instituted, he says:—"This year I have, for seven months, held a weekly meeting for the instruction of the young of my flock; and I bless thee for the pleasure that it gives me, and for the interest which was felt in it. Make these, my young scholars, thy disciples indeed,—ornaments to the congregation, and a blessing to their pastor. I acknowledge, with gratitude, the kind reception my catechism has met with. O that the young, who are employed in learning it, may be taught of God, may be animated by the spirit which it recommends, and be partakers of the blessings it exhibits."

In one of the letters, which he wrote at this period, he gives the following account of a narrow escape which he made from the bludgeon of a footpad:—

"Falkirk, 1st December 1818.

"I was assisting at the Lord's Supper, at East Calder, on the second Sabbath of November. Mr Primrose is a kind-hearted man, and I was much pleased with the respectability of his congregation. In going from East Calder to Slateford, on the Monday evening, I made a narrow escape from being robbed, and was indebted to the swiftness of my horse for my safety. It was a very lonely place of the road; and, as I have heard since, has been the scene of assault before. I luckily noticed the footpad, where he was skulking, and ere he could seize the bridle, or strike me with his tremendous bludgeon, I sprung past; and, though he ran hard after me, my horse was so capital a one, that it soon put me out of his reach. I rode the rest of the way in fear and trembling, lamenting that Mr Primrose's kindness had kept me till five o'clock; but I got safe to my uncle's, at half-past six."

The following extracts are from letters addressed to the Rev. Mr H.:—

"December 9, 1819.

"You would see in the papers the death of Mr James Bel-

frage announced. He was an amiable man, and the long affliction under which he laboured, had been blessed to him as a season of serious reflection. In his last hour, he expressed a firm and blessed hope of salvation, and died with much tranquillity. To his father and mother, the loss is peculiarly painful, as to them he had been so uniformly kind and dutiful; and the provision he has made for them, is a proof how dear their comfort was to his heart.

“ You will see, in the Repository for this month, a memoir of a very excellent young lad, a son of my neighbour at Linlithgow.* It was drawn up by me, at the request of his father, and will, I hope, be useful to young people. His affecting expressions, in his illness, were taken down by Mr Watson; and they show no common degree of faith and piety. I have heard, since the manuscript was sent away, that your sermon, on the Sabbath evening, at Portsburgh, last summer, was the last that he heard, and that he felt deeply interested in it. He has now received the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul; and may you and I, in life and death, feel the supporting and animating influence of that great principle, which can render every duty easy, and every affliction light.

“ You are happily removed from the tumults of the people. At present, we are quiet here also; and the weavers, who had no work, are employed by the gentlemen in the neighbourhood. I hope that the measures adopted by the Parliament will have a good effect. Blasphemy and sedition are circulated to a dreadful extent; and I find that Wooler’s Black Dwarf is read by a number of people here, and in the neighbourhood; and his insolent scurrility, and artful misrepresentations, must have the most pernicious influence. I have seen no movement of the county of Kinross to address the Prince. They will not surely remain an exception, in the general movement of loyalty and patriotism.

“ I finished to-day Mrs More’s ‘Moral Sketches.’ It is an excellent book, and bears a faithful testimony against some of the foibles of professors of religion, as well as against the dissipation and impiety of many in the fashionable circles. She has laboured long and ably in the cause of religion and virtue, and this is her last effort.”

* The Rev. Mr Watson.

“ *November 27. 1820.*

“ A very melancholy incident has occurred of late, with two persons from this neighbourhood. A gentleman and lady were married in October, last year, and went to London to spend the winter. In the spring, they went to Italy, and left Rome, to return to Scotland, on the 26th of July, and died at Bologna on the 5th of August. They were insensible in fever, when they arrived at the inn in that place, and died within an hour of each other, and were buried in the same grave. An English gentleman, who had halted at the inn a month after, has communicated the intelligence to their friends here, and their effects have been sealed up by order of the government, till intelligence was received from their friends. The lady was within a few weeks of being a mother; the gentleman was the only surviving son of his family, and the possessor of a very handsome property in this town and neighbourhood. This affecting incident has made a deep impression here. Such things are painted in tales of fancy; but I recollect nothing like it in real life. It shows us the vanity of all earthly expectations, and the sad uncertainty of all the happiness of this passing scene. * * * * *

“ I have scarcely left myself room to mention, that I have been busy, for a year past, with a new volume of Addresses. They are to be forty in number, and six sermons are interspersed. I have taken more pains with the composition than with the first volume. They are more didactic; but still, I hope, sufficiently devotional to interest a religious heart. If there be any profits, I mean to devote them to two or three ministers, whose families are large, and whose stipends are small. This is a charity that lies near my heart, and is not chargeable with ostentation, as a donation of them to a public society would be. The book goes to press in January.”

In the month of September 1820, an event took place, which will long be memorable in the History of the Scottish Churches; namely, the re-union of the two leading bodies of the Secession, after they had been in a state of separation for a period of seventy-three years. When the project of a re-union was first proposed, and when petitions were poured in upon the two Synods, from the congregations on

both sides of the Secession, Mr Belfrage was one of those who thought that the proposal was premature ; and he wished for delay, as he was afraid that the minds of neither party were sufficiently prepared for taking such a decided step. But, after the union was accomplished, his views underwent a change, and he rejoiced in the event that had taken place, as fitted to have a happy influence upon the interests of religion. In common with all those who were present in Bristo Street Church, on the 8th of September, and witnessed the solemn proceedings of that eventful day, he was delighted with the spirit that animated the united assembly. In one of his Meditations, he has recorded, in the following terms, the delight which he experienced on that interesting occasion :—" This year has been distinguished by the consummation of the union betwixt the two branches of the Secession ; and blessed was I in witnessing a scene so solemn, and yet so delightful, and marked by the spirit of devotion and love. May that spirit ever rest on the United Church ! May it be like a dew from the Lord, in all the districts of our land, and be ever distinguished by pure principle, enlightened zeal, and liberal charity."

In one of the extracts quoted above, Mr Belfrage refers to a second volume of Addresses, which he was preparing. This volume was published early in 1821 ; and the circumstance of the first volume being now in the third edition, augured well for a favourable reception to the second. The reputation which Mr Belfrage had already acquired as a devotional and a practical writer, was considerably increased by this new publication. He had the satisfaction to know, that his second volume of Addresses was prized by the religious public, even more highly than the first. The following opinion given of this new work, by one of the critics of the day, in a religious periodical, may here be introduced with propriety :—" This volume consists of no fewer than forty sacramental addresses, with six sermons interspersed. What must strike every reader, in the perusal of these addresses, is the great skill which the author has displayed in giving variety

to his subjects. When we consider that Mr Belfrage had already given to the world, in his first volume, sixty addresses, and that the present volume makes the total number amount to one hundred, all of them relating to sacramental topics, our readers will certainly agree with us in thinking, that it must have required no small degree of ingenuity to give even the appearance of variety to such a vast number of addresses. This is a species of writing for which the structure of Mr Belfrage's mind appears peculiarly to adapt him. If we may judge of him from his productions, there is an ardour of feeling, and a warmth of affection, combined with a considerable degree of taste and imagination, which point him out as one peculiarly well qualified for exciting devotional feeling in those who may be engaged in commemorating their Saviour's death. His language indicates a mind deeply imbued with genuine piety, and proceeds apparently from a heart that is itself powerfully affected by the sentiments which it utters."

Soon after this, Mr Belfrage published a funeral discourse, which he delivered in Queen Anne Street Church, Dunfermline, immediately after the death of the Reverend Dr Husband, senior pastor of that congregation. Betwixt that talented individual, and the subject of this memoir, there had existed a long and intimate friendship; and it was in accordance with the wish of the former, expressed during his lifetime, that the latter was requested, along with another intimate friend, to improve his death, by preaching a funeral sermon. This request was conveyed in the following letter, which Mr Belfrage received, announcing the death of his lamented friend. The letter was written by the Reverend James Macfarlane, colleague and son-in-law of Dr Husband, a person who united, in a high degree, vigour of intellect with warmth of heart; and who, by his amiable dispositions, unaffected manners, and sterling integrity, secured for himself a high place in the affections of all who shared in his friendship:—

Dunfermline, 17th May 1821.

“ MY VERY DEAR SIR,—This day, precisely at 12 o'clock noon, my dearest colleague drew his last breath. He died very pleasantly, without a struggle. It indeed could hardly be otherwise; for his distress had rendered him indescribably weak. To me this is a sad bereavement; the greatest (one excepted) that I have met with in the course of my pilgrimage through this weary world. He was to me a firm and steady friend; a wise and prudent counsellor; and a non-such colleague. Such habits of intimacy and friendship I never can form with another. All the essential qualities of a colleague he possessed in great perfection. Any thing mean, low, or dishonest, his soul abhorred: but I have not time to enlarge, and indeed it is unnecessary to you who knew him so well.

“ The funeral is to take place on Tuesday first, at 1 o'clock P. M., when it will gratify us all very much to see you here; and I must add, that, could you remain with us on the Sabbath following, and give us a sermon, it would complete the gratification. Do not consider this as a mere word of course. It is most earnestly desired by us all. Mr James Husband has just said to me, that he recollects to have heard his father say, some time ago, when talking on the subject of funeral sermons, that he knew no man whom he would more wish to preach his funeral sermon than Mr Henry Belfrage. I know this will have its own weight with you. I have, indeed, just written Mr Greig of Lochgelly, to preach with us on said day, but am uncertain whether he will comply. It would please me much that you and he should be colleagues on the occasion.

“ I have many things to say to you; but cannot now say them. O let me have a share, a particular share, in your sympathy and your prayers. I covet them. I need them. I believe you will not deny them. ‘O that we were wise, that we understood this, that we would consider our latter end.’ All of us unite in kind regards to you and all your sisters. Believe me, my dear sir, yours most affectionately,

“ JAMES MACFARLANE.”

Mr Belfrage having complied with the request thus presented to him, received another communication from his

friend, requesting him, in name of the session of Queen Anne Street, to publish his discourse.

“Dunfermline, 29th May 1821.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I hope you got safely home, and that you have complacency in reflecting on the great exertions you made to gratify your friends in Dunfermline. I have just time to say, that our session, which met yesterday, were unanimous and zealous in their desire that you should publish your sermon, which you preached here, on Sabbath afternoon, with the character of my dear colleague, which you gave, attached to it. While it will highly gratify the vast multitude who heard it, I am fully satisfied that it will do honour to yourself—both to your head and to your heart. I am sure your judgement and your feelings will not suffer you to refuse compliance with the above desire, which, you may rest assured, proceeds from hearts deeply interested in the subject of it. The sooner the sermon and character appear, the better. You may order three hundred copies to be sent to me, immediately upon its publication.—Believe me, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

“JAMES M'FARLANE.”

This sermon was published under the title of “The Feelings Excited by Departing Worth.” The subject of it is Elisha's exclamation, when he beheld Elijah ascending in a whirlwind to heaven: 2 Kings, ii. 12; “And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, &c.” The language of Elisha is viewed as expressive of strong attachment, fervid gratitude, deep regret, and sad foreboding. An extract or two from this discourse, will be gratifying to many of our readers, as portraying the excellencies of him, whose memory it was intended to embalm.

“To the conduct of Elisha at his master's departure, how similar, my brethren, were your feelings while you conveyed the remains of your pastor to the grave! Many of you looked up to him with gratitude as the instructor of your childhood, and the guide of your youth; a considerable number of you can, I trust, bless God that he was to you a

spiritual father; and all of you revered him as an able and faithful minister of the New Testament.

“In his settlement among you, in the days of his youth, it was his earnest prayer to God, ‘Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go in and out before this great people;’ and the request was granted. Wisdom was a leading feature in his character; not the low cunning and carnal policy which has sometimes assumed its name, but the prudence of moral sagacity and caution. While he fed you according to the integrity of his heart, he guided you by the skilfulness of his hands. Long and bright was his course among you; and he was regarded with increasing veneration and confidence to its close.

“His intellectual faculties were of no common order. His mind was acute and powerful, and enriched by regular and liberal study. His discourses were always prepared with care, and were marked by sublime conceptions of the divine character and administration,—the elaborate defence and illustration of the doctrines of grace,—an accurate knowledge of the human heart, and of all the varieties of human character,—the most consolatory views of the trials of the good,—and by the earnest enforcement of every religious and moral duty. As an expositor of Scripture, he was far removed from all parade of critical skill, from that expansion and diffuseness in which the proper design of lecturing is forgotten, and from that flimsiness which leaves the passage almost untouched; but was distinguished by a clear discernment of its true sense, the vivid exhibition of its leading ideas, and by the ingenuity and suitableness of his practical reflections. His style was correct, perspicuous, and forcible; and not merely in the early periods of his ministry, but throughout his life, the language of his discourses was characterized by elegance and accuracy. The ornaments which he employed were not the suggestion of an undisciplined fancy, which disgusts by its profusion and extravagance, but were selected with such judgement, introduced with such propriety, and

managed so happily, that they never failed to strike or to charm. There was such a dignity and grace in his manner as a public speaker, that he was always listened to with respectful attention. His addresses to the Deity were marked by the solemnity and tenderness of devout feeling, and by a variety and copiousness, which showed the fertility of his mind, and the extent of his Christian experience. In short, there was a combination of excellencies in him as a preacher, which are seldom found united, and which raised him to high distinction as a Master in Israel.

“ In his friendships he was ardent and steady. For some of the companions of his early studies, and whose days were extended like his, he retained an attachment through life, and delighted to recal the pursuits of youthful genius, and the sweet counsels of early piety. For the friends of whom he was deprived by death, he retained a tender recollection, and felt the kindest interest in their families, by whom he was regarded with veneration and love, as their own and their father’s friend. Sacred is that friendship which is hallowed by the memory of the dead ; and doubly dear is that pledge of regard which is given and received for the sake of those who are in the dust. It was his delight to trace in the young a resemblance to departed worth. He felt a melancholy pleasure in speaking of the wise and good who were gone ; and, with the eloquence which springs from the heart, he exhibited their virtues as a tribute to their worth, and as a pattern for imitation.

“ The society of his friends was always delightful to him. Such was his warmth of benevolent feeling, that in their company his spirits never flagged ; and so well acquainted was he with the literature, and the leading characters and events of the day, and so happy was his manner of communicating what he knew, that he was listened to with unceasing interest. He had such a delicacy of moral feeling, and such a strong sense of what is becoming, that he never stepped beyond the limits of propriety ; and at the periods when his familiar friends saw him most at ease, they delighted in him

more, without venerating him less. He shrunk from no exertion or exercise which was requisite for their welfare, entered with the kindest sympathy into all their sorrows, and felt their happiness as his own. Never was his manner haughty or obtrusive; but there was in it a modesty and a deference to others, which were truly amiable. He delighted to foster every opening excellence, and laboured to protect it from the censures of ignorance, prejudice, and envy. His last act of public duty was introducing the son of a valued friend to his charge. His sermon, on that occasion, was in his usual style of excellence; and the text of it, ‘On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it,’ is not only full of encouragement to those who are engaging in the work of the Gospel, but is an unfailing support to the heart amidst the removal of the watchmen of Zion.

“In his family, he laboured with unwearied diligence to promote wisdom and piety in all its members; nor can his children ever forget the solemn seasons, in which he took them, one by one, into his chamber; endeavoured to excite serious impressions in their minds; pointed out the best objects of pursuit in life; warned them against the snares to which they might be exposed, and implored for them, while they knelt by his side, the grace and the blessing of God. Such was his modesty, that he seldom spoke of his religious feelings; but there were seasons in which, from the fulness of his heart, he revealed his strong impressions of Divine things. In the retirement of the closet, he was much with God, and his studies were guided and blessed by the power of devotion.”

Mr Belfrage, in addition to his other labours, as a minister and an author, became a contributor, about this period, to the *Evangelical Magazine*; and he continued, during the remaining part of his life, to be a steady friend to that useful work. He was led to form this connection with it, from the urgent representations of his warm-hearted friend Dr Waugh, and also from the consideration, that many widows

of Scottish dissenting ministers received liberal aid from its funds.

The following extract is from a letter, which Dr Waugh addressed to him on this subject. It is dated London, 5th July 1822. After an apology for not having taken earlier notice of Mr Belfrage's last work, the writer thus proceeds, in a playful style :—" Now, my good fellow, let me urge on your mind, what I have repeatedly urged, that you give me just two hours of your time, for turning the sappy end of one of your most practical sermons into the form of an essay for the Magazine. I send your widows L. 100 a year, and I might as well try to move Cheviot or the Bass, as arouse your torpid mind. If you wanted either talent or time, there would be some excuse ; but, in your individual case, we know you want neither. Will you constrain me, then, to my *strange* work, to suspect that you want heart. This is the last thing I'll do. Indeed, it is like transubstantiation—*it will not believe for me*. I have just come home from Warwick, Sheffield, and Hull—450 miles. Fain, fain would I have gone north, by Scarborough, Whitby, and Alnwick Castle, to the matchless classic vale of Tweed, the land of my fathers' sepulchres, and scenes of my youth, endeared by a thousand tender associations. But—but I could procure supply only for two Sabbaths."

In 1822, Mr Belfrage favoured the world with another production from his pen. It was a small volume, entitled, " Sketches of Life and Character, from Scripture and from Observation." This little volume possesses the same elegance of style, and breathes the same affectionate and pious spirit, which characterize his other works. " The Scriptural pieces contain faithful illustrations of the sacred narratives ; and, in the other Sketches, the reader is presented with real incidents, and the lessons which they enforce." " The characters are taken from various scenes, to show that religion can adorn every age, and bless every condition ; and that, in every sphere, the hope of impunity in sin is vain, and that its wages are shame, misery, and death."

The following letter, addressed to the Rev. Mr Macfarlane of Dunfermline, accompanied a copy of his “Sketches :”—

“ Falkirk, 20th August 1822.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Along with this, I send you a copy of a little work of mine, which—as a record of some whom you esteemed—will be read by you with interest.

“I was much disappointed in not seeing you, when you were at Doune. The Lord has been working deliverance for you, to the great joy of all that love you ; and I hope you have years of comfort and usefulness before you, in the land of the living. It will not be convenient for me to be in Dunfermline this season, as I was in Edinburgh last week, and go to Glasgow in the end of this week, to preach for Dr Dick.

“I met with an instance of the preserving care of Heaven, in returning from Edinburgh. In leaping into the boat, my foot slipped, and I fell into the canal. I held by the side of the boat, till I was drawn into it. One of my legs is a little hurt, and I had to sit with my wet clothes till I came home ; but I have suffered no serious injury.

“I shall be glad to hear from you soon, and that you write me by post. I am anxious to hear how you are, since your return. If any thing occurs to you, in reading the Memoirs of Mr Gilfillan, or Mrs Fletcher, which I may have omitted, I will take it kind if you will mention it, as it may be useful, in case of a second edition. Remember me, in the kindest manner, to your dear young people, and to Mr Husband ;—and, with best wishes, I am, my dear sir, yours affectionately.”

To this letter, Mr Belfrage received from his friend the following reply :—

“ Dunfermline, 28th August 1822.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have received your very acceptable favour of the 20th current, along with your recent publication, namely, “Sketches of Life and Character.” I have perused it with much interest and pleasure. Some of the individuals you characterize in this little volume were my particular friends, for whom I entertained the most cordial regard. The character you have given of them is remarkably just and appropriate. You knew them thoroughly, and have represented them truly. The only remark

that has occurred to me, in the perusal, is one which you will consider as trivial. In characterizing Mrs Fletcher, I could have wished that you had devoted a page or two to the character of her worthy husband*, whom I esteemed as one of the most upright and honest of mankind, with whom I was ever acquainted. You do indeed make mention of him with honour; but my meaning is, I could have wished you to have said something more of him. But this, perhaps, was not consistent with the object you had contemplated. Receive my best thanks for this other fruit of your industry, and of your regard for the welfare of your fellow-men. But let not this publication form an apology for your not favouring the public with a handsome octavo volume of your valuable discourses. I am persuaded that they might do much good, and would add to your reputation as an author.

“ I promised myself much enjoyment in the visit you proposed to Dunfermline, and feel a good deal disappointed in your having resolved not to realize it. In my present enfeebled state, it would have been a peculiarly welcome visit. Though I am much better than I was at one period, still I am far from being well; and indeed, my dear friend, it is very doubtful whether I ever shall be well, till I arrive at that glorious world, where the ‘ wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.’ If it be my happiness to reach that blessed place, I will completely forget all the disagreeables in my afflicted pilgrimage. Blessed state! When shall I attain thy lovely innocence! When shall I enter thy divine rest! When shall I arrive at thy security—thy pleasure! Forgive this personal aspiration.

“ Your step into the boat on the canal was a dangerous one.

* The person here referred to, is the Rev. William Fletcher, who, for a period of forty-three years was minister of the Associate congregation of Bridge of Teith. The compiler of this portion of the memoir was associated with him for some time in the work of the ministry, and he never knew an individual to whom the description given by Christ of Nathanael, was more applicable:—“ Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” He was a man of great simplicity of character, of uncompromising rectitude, and of unaffected piety. He did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God. In the beginning of April 1815, he went to Stirling, when he was upward of fourscore years of age, to attend a quarterly meeting of the committee of the Bible Society, was seized with fever, and, after a short illness, expired in a friend’s house in that town.

Thanks to the Preserver of Men, that it has been attended with no bad effects. May you be long preserved for a comfort to your friends, and for being useful in God's Zion. Mr James Husband, who has just been here, and all my young people, unite with me in kind regards to you and all your sisters. Believe me, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

JAMES MACFARLANE."

This excellent individual died a few months after writing the above letter; and Mr Belfrage wrote an account of his life and character, which was inserted in the *Christian Monitor*. With the view of preparing this biographical notice, he wrote the letter which follows. It is addressed to Mr James Husband, Dunfermline.

"Falkirk, 5th May 1823.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have been urged by some friends to write a memoir of Mr Macfarlane, for the magazine. I had some conversation with Mr Brown on the subject last week, and promised to him to do it. Before I go far in it, I wish to know if Mr Greig, or any other person, at the request of the relations, is engaged in drawing up any thing of the kind. If this is the case, I will on no account interfere with them. Write me in the course of this week if I may proceed.

"With Mr Macfarlane's character and history I am well acquainted; but if you recollect any incidents fit for the public eye, or any of his striking remarks on any subjects, especially of a religious cast, to which I must be a stranger, I beg that you will mention them in your letter. Mention whether he was born in the village of Doune, or in its neighbourhood; the date of his ordination at Dunfermline, and his first text after his ordination. Mention also any sermons of his which were peculiarly noted for the impression which they made, and any happy results of his labours which have come to your knowledge. Mention any thing, also, which you wish to render the memoir of so amiable a man as interesting as possible.

"I was present at the formation of the Society for Ministers' Families, on Wednesday night. The meeting was respectable. I have consented to preach the first sermon for the benefit of the society, next week, at Glasgow. The time is short, but the request was so urgent, and the cause so near my heart, that I could

not persist in declining the service. I hope that the society will flourish, and will be a blessing to a most deserving and helpless class, generally speaking, in society.

“Would you mention what were the subjects on which Mr Greig preached after the funeral of our lamented friend. Remember me kindly to your partner; also to the dear orphans, whom I shall always love, for their father’s sake. With best wishes for your welfare, and that of your family and friends, I am, &c.”

During the year 1823, Mr Belfrage published his “Monitor to Families, or Discourses on some of the Duties and Scenes of Domestic Life.” This publication was designed by him to promote religion in the domestic circle; and it was eminently calculated, both from the excellence of its contents, and from the affectionate earnestness of the style, to produce this effect. Christian principle and benevolent feeling appear harmoniously blended throughout the volume.

The same year he published, for the benefit of the young, “A Guide to the Lord’s Table, in the catechetical form;” and he added to it, an Address to applicants for admission, and some meditations to aid their devotions. When the extent of Mr Belfrage’s congregation is taken into the account, and when we consider the scrupulous punctuality with which he attended to all the ministerial duties of visiting and catechising, it may appear surprising that he should have found time to prepare and publish, in such a rapid succession, so many useful works, suited to all classes of Christians. It shows us what can be accomplished by diligence and perseverance, and a proper husbanding of time.

The celebrity which Mr Belfrage had now acquired, as a religious writer, and the high reputation which he maintained, as a faithful and laborious minister of the Gospel, procured for him the friendship and respect of some who occupied situations of eminence in the Established Church. Among the number of these was Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart., D.D., one of the ministers of the West Church, Edinburgh. Through the agency of this eminent

clergyman, the attention of the University of St Andrew's was drawn to Mr Belfrage's writings, and to the claims which he had, both as a minister and an author, to academic honours; and that University honoured themselves, as well as did honour to Mr Belfrage, by conferring on him the degree of Doctor in Divinity. The manner in which this degree was conferred, was creditable to all the parties concerned. On the part of Mr Belfrage, it was unsolicited and unexpected. On the part of the University, it formed a remarkable exception to the general rule which it follows in conferring honorary titles, which is, to bestow them exclusively (or nearly so) on ministers belonging to the Establishment. In the present instance, its highest literary honours were conferred upon a Dissenter—they were conferred unanimously; and, to the credit of the University be it recorded, they were bestowed without the usual fees being exacted. The conduct of Sir Henry Moncreiff in this transaction, was marked by the greatest kindness and liberality. In soliciting and obtaining from the University of St Andrew's the degree of D.D. for Mr Belfrage, he gave a most gratifying proof of his personal regard for him, and showed a laudable desire to reward professional merit,—even though found in a Dissenter. On receiving notice that he had been successful in his application to the University, he conveyed the intelligence to Mr Belfrage in the following friendly letter:—

“Edinburgh, 8th March, 1824.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I am happy to tell you that I have succeeded in my application. The University of St Andrew's have, in the handsomest possible way, conferred on you the degree of D.D. Principal Nicol was with me on Friday, and delivered to me your diploma. I have no means of sending it to you, without running some risk of destroying it, as it is written on vellum, and cannot be inclosed in a letter. In the way in which I have obtained it, no dues are exacted: it does not cost a single farthing. I would wish it were in your power to be in Edinburgh for a single day this week, not only that I may deliver the

diploma into your own hands, but that I may settle with yourself in what way your degree should be inserted in the newspapers. The University have left it to me to mention it in any form I please. I shall be at home, for aught I know, the whole week. I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

“H. MONCREIFF WELLWOOD.”

Never was this honour conferred on an individual more deserving of it, or one better fitted, by his varied attainments, for sustaining the dignity which the title confers. Theological knowledge, sound scholarship, and ministerial gravity, were possessed by him in a high degree. His conduct, both in public and in private, was uniformly such as to add a lustre to the title which he wore. The honour which the University of St Andrew's conferred upon him, was received by him with grateful feelings; and it tended to stimulate him to greater diligence in study, and to more active exertions in labouring for the good of his fellow-men.

The Directors of the London Missionary Society invited him to preach one of the sermons, at the Anniversary Meeting in May 1825, and with this invitation he cheerfully complied. In the prosperity of that Society, he felt much interested, and he was willing to do all that he could to promote its success. He considered that it had a strong claim upon the support of all denominations of Christians, on account of its extensive and benevolent labours in propagating the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathen. Besides, he entertained a high idea of the piety and zeal of those excellent men, with whom this institution had originated, and some of whom had now grown grey in the management of its affairs. Among the number of these honoured individuals, was his friend Dr Waugh, who had frequently undertaken long and toilsome journeys, to plead the cause of the Society, and who had spent a great portion of his time and strength in its service.

On this occasion, Dr Waugh wrote two letters to his friend in Falkirk, previous to his leaving home, not only to welcome him to London, but to invite him to become a mem-

ber of his household, during his stay in the metropolis. Both of these letters we here insert : they are fine specimens of that warmth of affection, that exuberance of fancy, and that playfulness of disposition, which characterized this venerable man, even at an advanced period of life.

“ *London, 15th March 1825.*

“ MY DEAR HARRY,—A cordial welcome to London ! Thousands that have never seen your face, will welcome you. May the Lord, the Spirit, send you in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace and love !

“ As I know you will be *pu'd a' to bits** when you arrive, I think it very provident and wise in me to bespeak your services on one Sabbath, at least ; and, when I tell you the reason, I think you will readily accede to my wishes. I am *provisionally* engaged to preach a sermon, on the 22d of May, at Lewis, in Sussex ; and the provision, I have told the people, is expressly to hinge on your taking my pulpit that day. It is for the Irish Evangelical Society. As you will be, on your arrival, encompassed like bees round the girdle—No ! that figure won't do—I'll mend it,—It shall be, that they will cling to you like bees to the *rose-bud*,—so I think it will be wise in you not to entangle yourself, except, as it is hereby excepted, with *me*, for May 22d, till we see you. I hope you will get a journey to Bath, and, may be, to Bristol too. Have six weeks' or two months' provision for your pulpit, safely secured, before you come away. Two months it must be, at the very least—mind that.

“ My health has been in a very precarious state for a long time ; but I look forward to its improvement, when the time of the singing of birds shall be come, and the voice of the turtle be heard in the grove. Except once, I have tried to hobble through upon Sabbaths, as well as I could, once a day at least, for several months past. To good Mr N——, my obligations are deep, and they have been conferred in a fashion that greatly augments the obligation.

“ Now, my dear Harry, good night. Love to your dear sisters, and to the good lady at Grangemouth, whose kindness to the suffering Moravians at the Cape, in their printed report, I read with delight. Ever and affectionately yours.”

* Pulled to pieces.

“ *London, 13th April 1825.*

“ MY DEAR HARRY,—Though I am convinced that your knowledge of the state of our hearts toward you, makes an invitation to you, to make this house your home, unnecessary; yet your exalted opinion of the breeding of the London Doctors in Divinity may induce you to expect such an invitation: therefore I send this, earnestly, affectionately, and with the authoritative tone which my attachment to your worth authorizes me to assume, to invite you to our humble habitation, the most comfortable bed in the house, and the warmest *neuk** in our heart.

We are all in high spirits at the prospect of your good company and companionable qualities, with the grateful feelings which your kindness to our young folks, in their state of vagrancy over the mosses, and muirs, and grey stones of our beloved country, has awakened in our bosoms. These have made us forget the ceremonial of life, and to indulge in a playful vein, rather at variance with the accustomed tone of our family feeling. But I am writing to *you*, and you will find an apology in your own good heart.

“ Love to your dear sisters, and to the good Mrs W., in which Mrs Waugh, the girls, and the Highland wanderer, most cordially unite. I ever remain, as you well know, my dear Doctor, your most affectionate friend and brother.”

“ P. S.—I wished you to preach to the genteelst of our congregations in Surrey Chapel, or to the most enlightened in the west end of the town, to wit, in Tottenham Court Road; but the good sense of Matthew Wilks, and others, think you should shed light on the dark minds of the folks in the Tabernacle, on Wednesday evening; think not yourself degraded, for Dr Love and myself were doomed to illumine that dark abode.”

We give an extract from the letter which Dr Belfrage wrote in reply to the above:—

“ *Falkirk, 23d April 1825.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I was favoured with both your letters in course. I had an invitation from the Miss Patisons, my cousins,

* Corner.

to reside with them while I was in London ; but I feel that I will be so much at home in your family, that I must say frankly, that I will stay with you. If I follow out my plan, I will go to France, after the fourth Sabbath of May. A very intimate friend of mine has gone to France for his health, and has written to me that he will be in Paris in May, and that he is most anxious to see me. If I could fall in with a companion in London for the journey, I would not hesitate about it.

“ I have now arranged my supplies for my pulpit, and have taken out my ticket for the James Watt Steam Packet, which sails from Newhaven on the 27th of April. If the weather is fair, we will be in London on Friday. I shall be very happy if I reach you so early. You must not depend on me preaching for you on the first Sabbath of May ; but I trust that I shall be able to give you a sermon on the second.

“ We dispensed the Lord’s Supper, at Falkirk, last Sabbath. Our usual day is the first Sabbath of June ; but, as I could not well be at home at that time, we thought it best to have it thus early. I defer all my other news till we meet. I felt, the last time I was in London, that I was with you as with a father ; and I am most grateful to God that I have the prospect of your counsels and kindness to encourage and guide me.”

Dr Belfrage reached London, in safety, and received a kind welcome from Dr Waugh, and his family. On Wednesday, the 11th May, he preached in the Tabernacle to an overflowing and attentive audience. The subject of his discourse was, Isa. ix. 6, one of the clauses of the verse ; “ His name shall be called the everlasting Father.” In his discourse he pleaded the cause of the perishing heathen, with all the eloquence and zeal which such a sacred cause was fitted to inspire. His appearance, on that occasion, was highly creditable to himself, and was gratifying to not a few who had hitherto been acquainted with him only through the medium of his writings. Some, who had been accustomed to hear him in early life, felt their old recollections delightfully revived by the sweet and musical tones of his voice.

A respectable minister, who then officiated in one of the Scotch churches in London, and who had been accustomed, in the days of his youth, to hear Dr Belfrage, on sacramental occasions, sent him a letter, congratulating him on the manner in which he had performed the service assigned him. From this letter we give an extract:—

Upper Clapton, 12th May 1825.

“MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I congratulate you most heartily on the very comfortable, and I have no doubt profitable manner, in which you have rendered your eminently valuable services to our society. In my youthful days, I used occasionally to be a hearer of yours, especially on Sacramental occasions; and although I have not heard you preach for nearly twenty years, yet you had scarcely begun your sermon last night, when your voice, your manner, and your every thing, became quite familiar to me; and I know not when I have had so many delightful associations revived in my mind, as I experienced last evening. It will afford me much pleasure to see you here, and to enjoy as much of your company as possible while you remain in town.”

The attention which Dr Belfrage received from kind-hearted friends, and also from many with whom he had not previously been acquainted, rendered his second visit to London no less agreeable than his first had been. It was a high treat afforded to him, to be present at the anniversaries of the great religious institutions of Britain. He there beheld wealth, and rank, and learning, associated with religion, and doing homage to her cause. He there beheld the prince and the mechanic, the master and the servant, the churchman and the dissenter, meeting together upon common ground, casting their spontaneous offerings into the treasury of the Lord, and endeavouring, by their united exertions, to fan in one another's bosoms the flame of holy love. The different scenes which he witnessed, in his visits from place to place, afforded him the highest gratification. But we shall allow him to express, in his own language, the feelings which he experienced. A few of the letters which he wrote to his sisters and brother, during his second sojourn in London,

have been preserved. These we now present to our readers :—

To his sisters :—

“ Salisbury Place, London, April 30th 1825.

“ MY DEAR SISTERS,—As I know you are anxious about me, I think it best to write to-day, and not to put it off till Monday. We reached Blackwall yesterday, at five o'clock in the afternoon, though the wind was against us the whole way. I am sure I will astonish and delight you, when I say, that I had no sea-sickness. The wind was fair, and the sea smooth, when we went on board. We had not sailed far before the wind got to the east, and a thick mist came on. I kept on deck ; there I sat, looking at the mist scowling o'er the sea, and the dark waves breaking on our ship, till near nine, when I went down to bed. The noise of the paddles, and people coming to bed at all hours, kept me from sleep for some time. Next day was bright with sunshine ; I sat upon deck : a gentleman had Blackwood's Magazine, which I read. In sailing up the river, I was struck with the verdure of the English fields, and the flourish of the gardens. The passengers were only about fifty ; they were all strangers, but behaved with great propriety.

“ I reached Dr Waugh's at seven, and received from him and his family a very kind welcome. My room looks into his garden, and there is a fine church which closes the view. I met Mr Ross, and a Mr Crosbie, the chaplain of the Refuge here, last night : my sermon for it is fixed for the evening of the third Sabbath of May. Mr Ross is to take me to the Earl of Rock-savage, who has read my works, and wishes to see me. I have agreed to preach for Dr Waugh to-morrow forenoon ; and he and I go down to Mr Broadfoot's, who dispenses the Sacrament to-morrow ; and we address one table each. Dr Waugh is feeble, but his spirits revived last night. I got a letter this morning, inviting me to attend and speak at a society on Thursday next. I am to hear Mr Sumner (who got the second prize at Aberdeen) preach for the Church Missionary Society on Monday evening. Next week I shall hear all the speeches, at all the great societies. I am quite well, and in good spirits ; I have seen so much of the Divine goodness in my journey, that, like Paul, I thank God, and am taking courage. Make yourselves as happy as you can ;

I will collect every thing that will be new and entertaining for you when I come home."

To his brother William:—

" London, May 5, 1825.

" MY DEAR WILLIAM,—* * * * * I have been at public meetings every day this week. On Monday I attended the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and heard some good speeches; I had to travel five miles to the place, and sit for six hours. On Tuesday I was at the Church Missionary Society: there I heard Cunningham of Harrow, deliver a most excellent speech. He is a most eloquent man; and yesterday I was at the great meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, where all that is most respectable in London were convened. A number of the nobility and dignified clergy were there. The spirit displayed was of the noblest description. I was gratified above measure. An American minister, and one from Paris, and one from Persia, stated the feelings with which, in their different countries, the institution was regarded; and that they felt, and delighted to acknowledge, the pre-eminence of Britain. I dined with a Mr M—— after it, who gave me a number of books and a map, to prepare me for my visit to France. To-day I dine with the Scottish nobility and gentry, at their anniversary; a ticket was sent me; they say it is a most interesting meeting. Lord Glenorchy is to be in the chair. Sabbath next I am to hear Mr Townley, the accomplished young man that went out to India; he is to preach for Dr Waugh. I preach two charity sermons on the 15th of May. On the 8th I am to meet with Brougham, &c. &c., at the National School Society, when the Duke of Sussex is to be in the chair."

To his sisters:—

London, 13th May 1825.

" MY DEAR SISTERS,—I had the pleasure of your kind letter yesterday. I begin my letter to you by telling you, that I got through my sermon on Wednesday, as well as I could have wished, and by saying how much I was delighted to hear from my home. But I must give you my history from the date of my letter to William. I went to the Scottish Corporation. A number of the Scotch nobility were there. I had to make two

speeches, with which they were highly pleased. Sir W. M. took down my address, as he wished to call on me. Next day I attended the Jewish Society; and there I was affected to a great degree, when I saw fifty Jewish girls, and fifty boys, stand up and sing hymns. It melted me into tears. A very fine address was made to them by Basil Wood; and Cunningham's speech that day was the most eloquent I ever heard. He spoke thirty-five minutes; and with a graceful animation, a beauty of language, and a sublime and tender piety, that was most delightful. These meetings are most fatiguing, from the heat and the excitement of the fine speeches; and you must be there two hours before they begin, to get a good seat. On Sabbath forenoon, I heard Henry Townley preach in Dr Waugh's, for the Missionary Society. He preached very well on the cure of the demoniac, in the fifth chapter of Matthew. He told some affecting things of India. Thirty-six pounds were collected. I preached for Mr Broadfoot in the afternoon and in the evening, on "Come see the place where the Lord lay." On Monday I attended the British and Foreign School Society, and heard a Greek speak, and saw some Greek boys. I kept at home all Tuesday; and, on Wednesday forenoon, by Dr Waugh's advice, I did not go to hear M——. It was five miles off, and he said it would fatigue me; I should reserve myself for night. It seemed the will of Providence that I should preach in the Tabernacle, as my letter was not delivered till Friday, when the arrangements had been published. Mrs W. and the ladies went with me, and the Doctor met me there; and one of the ministers came in for me to conduct me to the pulpit. Nearly 4000 people were there. I never saw such a crowd. I began to preach at a quarter past six; and, after preaching fifty minutes, I intermitted, and asked them to sing a few lines. Dr Chalmers did this, and Irving; and Dr Waugh thought it would be wise. I then resumed, and concluded my sermon in forty minutes. My voice kept up wonderfully. I understand I was heard distinctly in every corner. I did not feel it so difficult as I feared. I came down the pulpit stair with very lively gratitude. I received many fine compliments. A great number of people had come to hear me, who had read my works. A gentleman met me in the street next day. He was so happy, he said, to hear one of his countrymen, and felt proud of

being a Scotchman. I know this will gratify you. I have got a very kind letter from Dr Manuel, requesting me to preach a public sermon in his church. I have given up the idea of France, since I got your letter, and will take some jaunts into places in England in its stead. I have kept my health well. I had a slight headach last night: it was owing to a seat of seven hours at the missionary meeting. I made a speech, and heard a great deal of eloquence. Mr Hankey, the chairman, a very pleasant gentleman, told me he recollected, when a boy at college, meeting with two Belfrages. He was delighted to see me. He was boarded in a Mrs Scott's. I remember him well. We dine with him tomorrow. Now, my dear sisters, make yourselves happy. My great labour is over, and all will now be little more than recreation. I cannot express the kindness of the family here. Dr Waugh is quite a father. Mrs Waugh is a most excellent character, and the ladies are most kind, cheerful, and pleasant. The young men treat me as a brother. They are most polite, and unwearied in their attentions to me."

To his brother William:—

Salisbury Place, 25th May 1825.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—On my return from Brighton last night I found your letter. It was most pleasant to me to hear from three quarters so dear to me. It is an enhancement to all the pleasures of England. I am very anxious about Sir Henry Moncreiff, a man to whose friendship I have been so much indebted, and whose worth I value so much. You will write me soon, and let me know how he is. I shall continue my journal since my last. On the 15th of May, I preached a charity sermon for a school, and collected L. 17. In the evening I preached for the Refuge, and collected L. 33. We had a very pleasant meeting in the city of London Tavern, at a dinner given by our chairman, on the 14th; and, on Monday, I dined with the trustees of the Evangelical Magazine; and they have requested me to be one of their number. It will put it in my power to serve the widow and the fatherless. On Tuesday, the 17th, I heard Mr Irving preach. Though it was a week-day, and the forenoon, and the chapel could contain 2000, it was crowded with a genteel congregation. I was agreeably disappointed both as to matter

and manner. There was little extravagance. The sermon was solid and powerful; and, except that his manner was rather too theatrical for me, it was that of a first-rate orator. He kept the people in rapt attention for two hours. That afternoon I dined at a beautiful place near Greenwich, in Mr Hardcastle's. I heard the cuckoo there, and the nightingale in the garden, before we came away. On Saturday, as Dr Waugh was poorly, I went down to Lewis, which is fifty-one miles from London, and preached there on Sabbath, for the Irish Evangelical Society. We collected L. 20, though the chapel was small. I lodged with one of the best families in the place, a widow lady, and her two daughters, whose son is one of the principal bankers in the town. In Scotland, rank and wealth are too often associated with indifference to religion, but in England it is otherwise. In these ladies, I saw the most elegant manners, in union with mild, enlightened piety. On Monday, I went with them, and some of their friends, to a place nine miles off, and preached to some schools, and had a most pleasant ride; saw ripe cherries in the open air: gooseberry bushes like trees; their growth is made to rise, not to spread. I saw the treadmill, and a number of culprits on it. It is not so severe exercise as I thought. It is constant, but the motion of the wheels is not rapid. These ladies were most polite in taking me to all the fine places about their town and neighbourhood. A fine boy went with me to Brighton. It is nine miles from Lewis. There is a chain-pier there, which is more splendid than the Leith one. The Pavilion makes no show, as it is low, and consists of a great number of little turrets, like a Turkish mosque. I left Brighton at twelve, and got to Dr Waugh's at seven. The Brighton coaches drive most beautifully, and the country is like Bothkennar Carse, the whole way. On Sabbath I have three sermons to preach, and two of them charity ones; but I am in great good health, and the politeness and civility of the people are delightful."

To his sisters :—

Salisbury Place, June 4, 1825.

MY DEAR SISTERS,—I this morning received your kind letter, and was much gratified by it. It is most delightful to me to hear that you are all well, and that the garden is looking so beautiful.

Dr Waugh's toast is, "The lassies and the shrubs." The death of Miss Campbell struck me very much. I trust she is gone to heaven. I did not go to Oxford this week, that I might not miss the meeting of the children at St Paul's, which was the most sublime scene I ever saw. But to give you my journal:—On Friday, I went and saw Westminster Abbey; I then went with Dr Waugh's family, to dine at a beautiful place three miles from London, in a Mr H——'s family, where the party was very happy. I amused them with Scottish stories. On Sabbath, I went out to W——, and preached for the Scottish Missionary Society, and collected L. 23. In the afternoon, I preached for Mr Burder, at Hackney; it was the genteelest audience I have seen in London. In the evening, I preached, in another chapel there, a sermon for young people: a lady who patronizes the school was present: we collected L. 12. I got home to my kind friends a little before ten. Monday, I went and saw the Exhibition of Pictures: there are many fine Scripture pieces. In the evening, I went to the House of Commons: there was nothing very interesting. On Wednesday, I went ten miles off, to a Bible Society, and saw the garden of Lady R——: the rodo-dendrons are more than twelve feet high. I saw some very fine American plants. On Thursday, I went to St Paul's: the doors were opened at ten, and we had to be there a little past nine. The service began at twelve, by the children singing the 100dth Psalm. Ten thousand children were present, who were placed in seats that rose above one another. The sound of their voices was grand and awful, accompanied by the pealing organ. An immense crowd was there. An Irish Bishop preached, but I could not hear him well; not one in twenty could hear,—the place is so large, and the bustle of such a multitude so great. He preached an hour and a quarter. On Sunday, I preached at Albion Chapel, in the forenoon: the audience was respectable. It is a very beautiful chapel. Dr Manuel's church was opened yesterday, after its repairs. Dr Macgill preached in the forenoon, Mr Irving in the afternoon, and I preached in the evening; these clergymen were all hearing me, and from them I received very polite thanks for my sermon. Mr Irving wished me very much to come and see him, but this will not be in my power. Mr C——, a most respectable minister, was there: he told me he came to hear the

author of works which he had read with delight. He spoke of my Sacramental Meditations as in extensive use among his people, and the congregations of his two sons; mentioned with much feeling my Memoir of my Father, and expressed his wish that I might proceed in a course so honourable and useful. I preached last night on the Song of the Redeemed. I go to Oxford tomorrow. I will leave London on the 15th of June, by the steamboat, get to Edinburgh on Friday, and home, I trust, on Saturday forenoon, with the mail, to my dear sisters, and my dear Rosepark."

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUATION OF HIS CORRESPONDENCE, AND AN ACCOUNT OF HIS MINISTRY.

Extracts from his Letters. Publishes "Discourses to the Aged." Letter from Rev. Dr Dick. Remarks on Authors. Pollok, the Poet. Death of Dr Waugh. Funeral Discourse for Dr Waugh. Letter from Rev. George Burder. His Marriage. Publishes "Counsels for the Sanctuary," &c. Letter from America. Visits St Andrew's. Memoir of Dr Waugh. Publishes "A Portrait of John the Baptist." His industry as an Author. Publishes "A Practical Exposition of the Shorter Catechism." Letter from a Minister in England. Letter to the Editor of the Evangelical Magazine. His labours as a Minister. Ministerial Visitation. Diets of Examination. Attention to the Young. Ministerial Success. Death-bed scenes. Attendance upon Church Courts.

DR BELFRAGE left his kind friends in London with regret. Though he returned to the scene of his accustomed labour with a heart as devoted as ever to his people and to his work, yet some of the letters which he wrote after his return, show that his affections lingered around the circle which he had left behind him in the metropolis. The society with which he mingled, during his temporary sojourn in the south, combined in it the charms of religion with the polish of refinement; and, to a pious and cultivated mind, such as his was, it possessed peculiar fascinations. In such society he delighted to mingle; it accorded well with his feelings and habits.

Writing to a friend, soon after his return, he says :—

“I stood on the deck, watching your little boat, till I saw it reach the shore, and you had passed from my view. I felt very sad and lonely after you went away. My spirits were much depressed in parting with my friends in London ; and had it not been for your kind and solacing society, the voyage would have been very gloomy. My heart revived when we came in sight of Edinburgh, and I reached my brother’s house before eight that evening. I left Edinburgh at eight on Saturday, and reached home at eleven. I was very anxious about my Sabbath duties, as my time for preparation was short, and as I felt fatigued by my journey ; but God disappointed my fears, and I got through with comfort. The delight of my good people at my return is very gratifying to me, and will, I hope, animate my future exertions to promote their salvation.

“Your father’s image is almost constantly before my heart, and I must ever regard him as the dearest of my friends. Never shall I forget, to my latest hour, the affectionate hospitality of your father’s house, and my delightful intercourse with the kindest and the best of human beings. The obligation, my excellent friend, is all on my side ; and the Almighty knows the sincerity and the strength of my gratitude, and the fervour of my wishes, that you and yours may be happy, ever happy.”

In a letter addressed to Dr Waugh, acknowledging the receipt of a donation from the Trustees of the Evangelical Magazine, to a widow of a dissenting minister, he says :—

“The prayers and the blessings of the widow and the fatherless are upon you. I must also say, that the prayers and blessings of your friend, Harry, are upon you from day to day ; for never can I think of London, but my heart pours out its best wishes for you and yours. I am delighted to think that Harrowgate has done you so much good, and I trust that God will strengthen what he has wrought for you.”

Writing to the same, he says :—

“Such is my respect and affection for you, that nothing delights me more than to hear from you. I trust, that by this time

your complaint has gone off, and that the God who has often restored your vigour, will continue to deal with you according to his mercy. I was much affected by the death of Dr Bogue. My intercourse with him, in London, impressed me with a very high idea of the manliness of his character, the vigour of his mind, his public spirit, his active habits, and the friendly dispositions of his heart. What an enviable death was his! How many hearts sighed, ‘My father! My father!’ as he went to heaven; and his memory will be blessed by thousands yet unborn.”

During the year 1826, Dr Belfrage preached and published a series of discourses “On the Duties and Consolations of the Aged.” “That work,” says the pious author in one of his Meditations, “I would lay at the foot of my Redeemer. O, bless it for giving light and peace to many in the evening of life, and make the feeble and the helpless to sing for joy!” “If, by these discourses (he adds), God shall be pleased to brighten to any old man the evening of life, to make him more useful in his narrowing circle, more amiable to those whose esteem and respect are of so much importance to his comforts, more detached from the world, in spite of increasing efforts to strengthen its cords, and more fit for eternity, into which he is about to enter,—he will rejoice in the kindness of that mercy which blesses the humblest efforts of the willing mind for his people’s good.”

This volume sustained the well-merited reputation which the author had already acquired as a religious writer. Soon after the publication of it, he received a letter from the Rev. Dr Dick, of Glasgow, Professor of Theology to the United Secession Church, expressing, in very flattering terms, the high opinion which he entertained of its excellence. The following is an extract:—

“ Glasgow, 20th January 1827.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I embrace the opportunity of Mr H.’s return, to thank you most sincerely for the present of your book. I value it as a token of your friendship, and I value it for its contents. I have read several sermons, and am highly pleased with them. I wonder, as I go along, how you have been able to

illustrate the different topics so fully and particularly; and am sure, that if I had attempted such subjects, my stock of ideas would have been speedily exhausted. This, as well as your other works, will not only be creditable to yourself, but will, I doubt not, answer the end which you had in view in giving it to the public,—the edification and consolation of many.”

In 1827, he published a third and an enlarged edition of his “*Sermons to the Young*.” Such pleasing testimonies of the general acceptance of his works, were highly encouraging to him, and stimulated him to make still further exertions for the instruction of his fellow-men. No sooner had one volume issued from the press, than he commenced preparations with a view to the publication of another. Nor was his time wholly occupied in writing for the benefit of others. He found leisure, amid his numerous avocations, for perusing the productions both of ancient and of modern writers. In some of the letters, which he wrote at this period, we find interesting notices of the books which he perused. The following letter was written by him to Mrs H., one of his most valued correspondents :—

“ *Rosepark, 2d March 1827.*

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot express the delight which your letter, which I received last Saturday, gave me. I will not deny, that the vanity of an author was flattered by it; but I can say, that feelings of a better sort were excited and strengthened, as I perused it. I have such a high idea of your taste and judgment, as could not but render your approbation of the volume peculiarly pleasing. I must ever feel the deepest gratitude for the encouragement you have given me. I was quite charmed by your description of the domestic readings at B——, and a few more such lessons may lead me into the state, which appears in your dwelling the association of intelligence, and friendship, and piety. Such a happiness must be lasting, for it is independent of the caprice and mirth of the world. Its seat is home, its guardian is wisdom, its heart is love.

“ You will see that Sir Walter Scott has owned the *Waverly Novels*. How amazing the rich and varied talents of that man!

I am afraid that his *Life of Napoleon* will not add to his fame. The novellist writes for the passing day, the historian for posterity. Sir Walter writes too hastily for a work that is to claim immortality, and his political prejudices will, in all probability, prevent him from judging of his hero with candour and impartiality. While he records the course of an ambition which grasped the empire of the world, and which shrunk in pity from no suffering, and in horror from no crime deemed necessary for the attainment of its object, it should also be stated what abuses he swept away, what improvements he introduced, and what talent he elicited.

“I have been reading Jay’s ‘*Christian*.’ It is practical, faithful, and interesting. It is quite in the style of his short discourses for the use of families, and is not written with that care or flowing eloquence, by which his earlier productions are distinguished. It can be said of Jay (though it cannot be said of every popular man), that he has merited his celebrity, and though he is too candid for a dogmatist, and too mild for a zealot, every competent judge must admire the fidelity and the skill with which he traces the obligations and the influence of religion.

“I was reading lately a part of a Latin work of a Dutch divine, which has for its title, ‘*The Economy of the Patriarchs*.’ It is a very learned production, but more curious than either edifying or practical. I will give you a specimen of the strange questions which he raises and answers. He gravely discusses the point,—whether the rib from Adam’s side, from which Eve was formed, was an essential or a superfluous part of man’s frame. After stating various arguments on both views of the subject, he gives his opinion that it was an essential part, but that the want was immediately supplied by the power of God. He deduces no inference from this opinion; and you will not think it presumptuous that I should suggest one, and it is this,—That a husband can make no sacrifice for his wife which is not compensated by the blessing of God, and by the returns of kindness which the gratitude and tenderness of the female heart never fail to yield.

“May a gracious providence regard you and your estimable partner with everlasting kindness, and make your cup to run over.—I am, &c.”

In another letter, addressed to the same correspondent, he says :—

“Have you seen ‘The Course of Time,’ a poem written by one of our preachers, and of which there is a very favourable review in the last number of Blackwood’s Magazine? It is a work of real genius; and though by no means equally well supported throughout, contains passages of high poetical talent. Its views of human nature, and of the government of God, and the future destinies of man, are decidedly scriptural; and it is delightful to think, that while poetry has been so often made the vehicle of infidelity, and the instrument for cherishing the worst passions, it appears here as the handmaid of revelation, and the guide to piety,—tender, fervent, and elevated.

“I have been reading, lately, M’Crie’s account of the progress and suppression of the Reformation in Italy. This is a book of wonderful research, and brings forward various facts and characters, known to none but the plodding student. He mentions some beautiful instances of the heroism and self-denial of female piety; and the feeling of admiration is mingled with regret, that so little can be traced of persons of whom the world was not worthy. Over how much excellence has oblivion spread its mantle,—but it has its record on high. I wish that Dr M’Crie had written the lives of some of the other fathers of our church. Such topics would have excited more general interest, and might, perhaps, revive the virtues of the olden time, which would chasten and direct the fashionable piety of the day.”

Extract from another letter, to the same :—

“I have been reading some of the posthumous sermons of Dr Doddridge; and though they are much inferior in fulness of illustration, and in the qualities of good writing, to those published by himself, yet I can trace in them that unction, that holy tenderness, and that happy appropriation of Scripture language and imagery, in which he excelled. I have read Cyril Thornton, a book beautifully written, and which, I understand, the citizens of Glasgow abuse with open throat, as a false and insolent libel on the politeness, the intelligence, and the hospitality of the Athens of the West. It would have been more just to Glasgow, had he

mingled some good qualities in his picture ; but it is a just display of upstart vulgarity and absurd affectation.”

In one of the above extracts, mention is made of Pollok, the gifted author of “*The Course of Time*.” Dr Waugh was anxious to obtain some information concerning this promising youth, whose poem and whose untimely death produced such a strong impression upon the public mind. In a letter addressed to his friend, dated Falkirk, 22d October 1827, Dr Belfrage communicated the following particulars concerning Pollok’s history, which will be perused with interest by all who have read “*The Course of Time* :”—

“I never saw Pollok, the poet (whose untimely death has caused such deep regret), but once. That I might gratify you, I applied to my cousin at Slateford,* who invited him to his house last summer, and had him under his care for several weeks, for any particulars concerning him that might be interesting. Every thing, that medical skill and generous friendship could do for him, was done before he left Slateford. A change of climate was the only expedient that gave the least hope of his recovery, and he was sent to the south, and died there.

“My cousin, in a letter which I have received from him, communicates the following particulars : Mr Pollok was born at Muirhouse, in the parish of Eaglesham. His father was a small farmer there. He studied at the University of Glasgow for nearly ten years ; and was distinguished by ardour in study, and by his attainments in moral science and the Belles Lettres. He was licensed to preach the Gospel, by the United Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, near the end of last spring. He delivered only three discourses in public, all of which my cousin heard. His first was on that text,—‘How long halt ye between two opinions ;’ the second on,—‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;’ and the last on,—‘His name shall endure for ever.’ His style of preaching was striking. He seized on one great leading principle in the text, and his reasonings and illustrations were close and powerful. As a man, he was keen, open, upright, and independent,—fond of rational discussion, and

* The late Rev. John Belfrage, M. D.

very caustic in his remarks. He had fully imbibed the sentiments expressed in his poem; and to its principles he often adverted in conversation with my cousin, and applied them to his own condition.

“Though devoted to Belles Lettres and poetry, he had powers for any thing. His mind was comprehensive and discriminating. When he wrote, his eye got wildly keen,—he was covered with perspiration, and seemed to be in a state of excitement approaching to frenzy. The measure of his going to Italy, and the subscription to defray the expense of it, originated with my cousin. One hundred and seventy pounds were collected; but on going to London, a consultation, previously concerted, took place. The medical men declared him unable to undertake such a long voyage, and sent him to Southampton. He died a month after he left my cousin’s house. I am happy that I have been able to gratify you by these views of his character and history, which, as yet, are known to few.”

A few weeks after he had written this letter, Dr Belfrage received an announcement of the death of his warm-hearted friend Dr Waugh. After a long and active life, spent in the service of his God, this venerable man finished his course on the 14th of December 1827. He descended to the grave, full of years, and loaded with the honours of the Christian ministry. No one mourned more sincerely on account of his death, than did the subject of this memoir. By the removal of Dr Waugh, a large blank was occasioned in the circle of his friendship. He had cherished toward this excellent person, while living, a warm attachment; and he retained an affectionate remembrance of him, after he was gone. The following extract is from a letter, which Dr Belfrage addressed to a member of Dr Waugh’s family, soon after the death of their father:—

“A missionary association, in my congregation, which has existed for fifteen years, and which, during that period, has raised more than L.700 for the missionary cause, was united lately with a general society formed in this place for diffusing religious knowledge. The injury done to the cause by the disruption of so many

societies, led me to think favourably of this union. The united society held a meeting a fortnight ago ; and, in my speech, I alluded to your father's zeal in that cause, and how he lived and died with it on his heart. He is gone to glory ; but the God of Elijah is with us, and the Counsellor of Zion hath not perished. He hath dropped his mantle—the faith, hope, and charity, in which he lived and died. Let us take it up ; and, with it, let us smite every torrent in our way. The stream will part asunder, and we will pass over its channel in safety. Never can I forget the overpowering sublimity and tenderness of his prayer at the opening of the missionary meeting for business. The audience was vast, but there was a stillness over it, like the stillness of death.”

Dr Belfrage preached a funeral discourse to his congregation, in which he paid a just tribute to the character of his departed friend. His text was the beautiful description given of Barnabas, in Acts xi. 24 ; “ He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith.” This discourse he afterward published in his “ Counsels for the Sanctuary.” We shall give a few extracts from the concluding part of it, in which our readers will find a well-drawn picture of the life and character of Dr Waugh. Adverting to the character of Barnabas, as sketched by the pen of inspiration, he says :—

“ I am called, in the providence of God, this day to show how it was manifested in the venerable Dr Waugh, who, after a holy and very useful life, has, a few days ago, entered into the joy of his Lord. His praise is in all the churches ; and in no place were his occasional ministrations more valued, or his character more revered and loved, than here. In his last visit, he discoursed to us on these words, ‘ He delighteth in mercy ;’ and the spirit of that text was the impulse under which he acted. Every talent, every day, and every effort he could put forth, were employed in promoting the spiritual and temporal welfare of his fellow-creatures. Nor was this his employment only during the vigour of his life ; for, in old age, and under many infirmities, the call of mercy roused him to energy ; and often has he risen from his couch to sit for hours, directing the applications

of forlorn suppliants, or to go forth to plead in their behalf with the affluent and the liberal.

“ I could tell you of the friendless whom he patronized ; of the unfortunate whom he assisted ; of the young whom he led to wisdom and to goodness ; and of the perplexed and the dejected, to whom he was a guide and a comforter. And these kindnesses were done with such a frankness and cheerfulness as enhanced the obligation. He was often called to mingle in society ; and never was he known to utter one sentence of detraction, or one word which could wound. There was in his manner a charming pleasantry ; for it was the dictate of a bright fancy, and of a cheerful heart ; and it was always associated with good sense and benignity. To edify and to make happy were his objects in going into company ; and his entrance was ever hailed with feelings of delight. Amidst this general benignity and kindness, he had his chosen friends, in whom he delighted. Never was there a heart more fitted for friendship ; his eye beamed with its brightest lustre, and his voice fell on the ear in its sweetest tones. His friendships were distinguished by the high estimation in which he held their objects ; the efforts he made to serve them ; the constancy with which he remembered them, after years of separation ; and the hallowed fondness with which he cherished their memory, and clung to their families when they were no more. And so happily did he maintain the saintliness of his character, amidst all his graciousness, that the more he was loved the more he was venerated. * * * *

“ He was one of the founders of the London Missionary Society, and was unwearied in his exertions to promote its interests. So far from grudging the sacrifices which he was called to make in its behalf, he used to speak of his obligations to that cause for the delightful friendships into which it had brought him, and for the life which it shed over every scene of duty. It owes much of its influence to the weight of his name, the power of his eloquence, and the efficacy of his prayers. But of every pious and benevolent institution, he was the friend and advocate. His pleadings in their behalf were so appropriate, and so richly imbued with the spirit of power and of love, that he seldom had reason to regret their failure ; yet he never neglected the spiritual interests of his own congregation. He preached to them regu-

larly three times every Lord's day ; held weekly meetings with the young, and taught his people from house to house. In that hallowed intercourse, his coming among them was hailed with the affection of holy friendship, and his counsels were received as the counsels of his heart. Children were charmed by his affectionate manners, kept his sayings, and pondered them in their hearts ; and an attachment to him was thus early formed, which no novelty could alienate, which honoured his grey hairs, and which will bless his memory. And, though popularity is fluctuating, and the crowd is apt to be attracted by a new name, he maintained a most respectable congregation to the last, and was looked up to by all classes with increasing love and veneration.

“ To his native country he continued strongly attached, and delighted to expatiate on the institutions, the scenery, and the intellectual and moral worth of the people of Scotland ; the wild magnificence of its mountains, and its moors, and its glens, consecrated by the struggles of its martyrs, and the solemnities of their worship. To the communions of his early days, his mind often reverted ; and of the character and the ministry of the excellent man who was the spiritual guide of his childhood and youth, he had much to say. He dwelt on his worth with the hallowed fondness of filial piety, and on the excellencies of the men of God, at whose feet he used to sit at sacramental solemnities. In the candour and liberality of his spirit, he did ample justice to what was worthy of praise in other parties, and lived on the most friendly terms with them ; yet he was decidedly attached to the religious body with which he was associated, and was ready, on every proper occasion, to defend its principles. But his prudence and mildness kept him from provoking disputation, and gave to what he was called on to say, an influence which never falls to the lot of the rash and noisy partisan. Amidst the comforts of his dwelling, his heart melted for the hardships of his poor brethren ; and he delighted to do justice to the virtues by which their limited circumstances were blessed with tranquility, and surrounded by respect.

“ It is a most gratifying circumstance, that a course so beneficial was prolonged for nearly half a century, and that his usefulness was unimpaired to the close of his life. While some men of God have, by bodily or mental infirmity, been debarred, for

years before they died, from public labour, he was regularly employed in the work of the Gospel to the last. On his last Sabbath on earth, he preached with all the fidelity and earnestness of a minister of righteousness to a neighbouring congregation; and, on the Lord's day before it, he had delivered a discourse to the young in his church, fraught with the best counsels of a father's wisdom. It was while reading to his family an exposition of the Psalms, that his last sickness came upon him; and, during the three days that he lay under it, how striking was the similarity of his dying to his living exercise! His deathbed was distinguished by the power of prayer, by the counsels and benedictions of holy kindness, by the patience which welcomed its sufferings, as the last discipline of a father, and by a hope which had long pointed to heaven as his home. Soothed by all the care and tenderness of the family of his heart, and leaning on the Saviour's bosom, like the disciple whom Jesus loved, he entered into everlasting rest."

In consequence of the frequent contributions which Dr Belfrage had sent to the pages of the Evangelical Magazine, and the active interest which he had taken in its success, it was proposed, and unanimously resolved, at a general meeting of the conductors of that useful periodical, that his name should be added to their number, in the room of Dr Waugh. This resolution was communicated to him in a kind and respectful letter from the Reverend Dr Morrison, one of the editors, who concludes his communication in the following terms:—"In the name of all my brethren, I return you my grateful acknowledgements for past help, and earnestly entreat a continuance of your most edifying quarterly communications, which, I assure you, are read with extraordinary delight, and, I hope, Christian benefit."

The Reverend George Burder, so well known in the religious world for his valuable publications, and who, for a number of years, had the editorial charge of the Evangelical Magazine, sent him, soon after this, a copy of one of his works, and accompanied it by the following letter, in which he expresses the satisfaction with which he had perused his

sermons to the aged, and gratefully acknowledges the contributions which Dr Belfrage had sent to the Magazine.

“ REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Be pleased to accept a copy of my twelve plain and short sermons for the aged. They are composed chiefly for the use of the poor and uninformed, of whom we have so many in the south. I have perused your excellent Sermons for the Aged, with much pleasure, and have derived advantage from them in this humble effort,—the last, probably, that I shall be able to make for general good, being now nearly blind, and much afflicted; yet am enabled to preach once on the Sabbath to my people.

“ We have lost good Dr Waugh,—a loss we deeply regret; for he was much and justly beloved by all who knew him. Most of the first promoters of the London Missionary Society have been removed to their long home. May you, Dear Sir, be long continued a burning and a shining light in the church of God. I am, Dear Sir, with sincere regard, your affectionate friend,

“ GEORGE BURDER.

“ Many thanks to you, Dear Sir, for your valuable papers in the Evangelical Magazine. Have the goodness to continue your aid. It will be of pre-eminent service to that work.”

Dr Belfrage now made a very important change in his mode of life, by entering into the marriage state. In the month of September 1828, he was married to Miss Margaret Gardner, youngest daughter of Richard Gardner, Esq. Comptroller of the Customs, Edinburgh. In a letter addressed to a friend, a few years before this, alluding to the subject of marriage, while as yet his affections were unoccupied, he says:—

“ My friends urge it very much, and I am satisfied, on various accounts, that it would be a wise measure; but I cannot move without attachment. Kind dispositions, a cultivated mind, and cheerfulness of manner, are the qualities which I must meet with, to be happy. One who would take an interest in my studies; with whom I could talk about my literary plans, and who

would be satisfied with the calm seclusion, and humble enjoyments of a country minister's dwelling, would find in me a heart disposed to gratify her, and one on whom not one look of kindness would be lost."

Delicacy prevents us from saying more on this subject, than that he found fully realized in the amiable and affectionate object of his choice, those qualities which he describes as necessary to make him happy.

Another volume, which Dr Belfrage had for some time been engaged in preparing for the press, was published in the beginning of 1829. This was his "Counsels for the Sanctuary, and for Civil Life," one of the most useful of his publications. It contains in it discourses peculiarly adapted to persons engaged in the various departments of life, such as the merchant, the lawyer, the physician, the soldier, and the sailor. The illustrations are occasionally interspersed with interesting notices of men who, while they were eminent in their profession, were at the same time distinguished for their piety.

"This volume concludes the author's series of illustrations of Christian morality, in its applications to the various spheres and periods of life. The three volumes formerly published, contained his friendly admonitions to the young, to families, and to the old; and, in this one, various classes in the church and society are addressed, which were not included under any of the former divisions, and are reminded of the duties, and encouraged under the difficulties, of their respective conditions." "The variety of scenes and circumstances adverted to in this volume, will show how broad the commandment of God is, and how wide is the range of pastoral duty. It may extend the charitable interest of its readers, in the lot and duties of their brethren, and evince, that the best morality is that which glows with the spirit of the cross, and which, by its practical energy, adorns and blesses every department of life."

By a letter which Dr Belfrage received from a minister

in America, he had the satisfaction to learn, that his writings were read and admired on the other side of the Atlantic, and that some of them had been reprinted in that country. The letter, which we here insert, was written by the Reverend Robert Forrest, formerly a minister of the Associate Synod in Scotland, but now connected with the Associate Reformed Synod in America.

“ *South Katright, 4th May 1829.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—When I had the pleasure of seeing you in Edinburgh, I promised to write you. Most of your writings are read and admired in this country. One of them was reprinted in New York, and I think it probable that others have been reprinted at Pittsburgh on the Ohio. A bookseller in New York has for several years imported such Scottish works as I have recommended to him; but our government has now laid such a tax on foreign publications, that importation is very limited. My retired situation in the interior, about 180 miles north-west from the city of New York, prevents me from giving much information that will be interesting. You are probably aware, that a new theological system has been manufactured in this country, is become highly popular, and is almost every year receiving improvements. It is commonly known by the name of Hopkinsianism, and seems to be a compound of Arminian and Socinian errors. Those who have adopted the system, are not agreed among themselves. Some are disposed to be satisfied with the moderate view given of it in Dwight’s Theology; others have, in effect, renounced the doctrine of the atonement: all of them reject the imputation of Adam’s sin, and the imputation of Christ’s; some of them teach, that the grace of faith is imputed in justification, and that faith is a modification of love, &c. For farther information, I refer you to a work, originally printed in New York, and reprinted in London,—‘A Contrast between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism, by Ezra Stiles Ely.’ Ely was a student of Dr Dwight’s, and had preached these errors for some time, but was brought to the knowledge of the truth by Dr Mason.

“ I consider it a peculiar blessing, that we have no church establishment; but I do not admire our civil government. The mode of electing a king once in four years, will not do long. It was expected that the Antiburghers here would form a union

with Paxton's party in Scotland ; but it is rather a doubtful matter at present. They have discovered, that the Original Seceders are not sound about the magistrates' power *circa sacra* ; they are violently opposed to the United Church in Scotland. They have refused all connexion with us, and we cannot form a connexion with the Presbyterian Church, as they tolerate Hopkinsian errors. Last summer, I transmitted to Mr K—— a particular account of the state of our church. The subject of Catholic communion and the psalmody give us considerable trouble.

“ I find that our late teacher, Dugald Stewart, has lived for several years in your neighbourhood. You can be able to inform me, if any biography is preparing, and if it is intended to publish his lectures on political economy. All his works have been re-published in this country, and are much esteemed. I would be much gratified to have a letter from you, directed to me, ‘ South Katright, Delaware County, State of New York.’ I set off to-day to attend the annual meeting of the American Bible Society. Requesting an interest in your prayers, I remain, dear sir, yours respectfully,

ROBERT FORREST.”

In the summer of 1829, Dr Belfrage was invited to assist in dispensing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, at St Andrew's. As it was from the University of this place he had received his academical honour of Doctor of Divinity, he took the opportunity, while visiting that ancient city, of presenting the University Library with a copy of his works. This expression of his gratitude and respect, was acknowledged in a polite note, which he received from Principal Haldane, who says, “ I am instructed, by the Senatus Academicus, to thank you, in their name, for this acceptable present of writings, which reflect so much credit on your piety, talents, and taste, and which have deservedly raised you to a very high place in the public estimation.”

Many pleasing proofs have been afforded, in the preceding pages, of the cordial and uninterrupted friendship which existed, for a long number of years, betwixt the subject of this memoir and Dr Waugh. After the death of the latter, Dr Belfrage engaged, along with his friend, the Rev. James

Hay of Kinross, in preparing a biographical account of that excellent individual. The result of their combined labours, was one of the most attractive volumes of biography extant. The “Memoirs of Dr Waugh” possess a peculiar charm. It is impossible to peruse them without being both delighted and instructed. This volume issued from the press in 1830. A large impression of it was speedily disposed of, and, in the course of a few months, a second and an enlarged edition made its appearance. This work, while it reflects no small credit upon the compilers, contains a fine memorial of the virtues and talents of him whose memory it is intended to preserve.

Dr Belfrage felt highly gratified in being instrumental in perpetuating the remembrance of so much worth. He considered that the Life of Dr Waugh was fitted to be eminently useful in stimulating others to the practice of the Christian virtues. It was not the vanity arising from successful authorship—it was a much nobler and purer feeling—that dictated the following language, made use of in a letter, soon after the publication of the Memoir :—“ I have every confidence in the success of the Memoir—its success in the noblest sense—for I know not a book better adapted to kindle in the heart the love of piety, nor one more fit to be put into the hands of those in whose welfare we are interested ; and well may we say, ‘ Behold how religion breathes cheerfulness, benignity, and peace.’ The charm of the book is Dr Waugh’s heart—all love to God and man. It will bring to his dwelling many a kind wish, and to his memory many a holy blessing. Oh ! may the Spirit of all grace bless the record, for the consolation of the hearts that loved him, and for the spiritual advantage of all into whose hands it may come !”

While Dr Waugh’s “Memoirs” were passing through the press, Dr Belfrage was engaged in preparing a series of discourses, which he published in the beginning of 1830, with the title of—“A Portrait of John the Baptist ; or an Illustration of his History and Doctrine.” “It is the object of this little volume to exhibit, in a form adapted for holy uti-

lity, the features of John's character, the incidents in his history, and the leading topics of his doctrine. There is something so elevated in his sanctity, so animating in his zeal, so generous in his self-denial, so instructive in his homage to the Saviour, and so affecting in the circumstances of his death, that they cannot fail, however feebly they may be represented, to interest the heart."

Dr Belfrage had now reached that period of life, when it might have been expected that he would court repose, and live upon the fruit of his past labours. But so far was this from being the case, that he laboured with greater assiduity than ever. During the concluding years of his life, his publications followed so rapidly upon one another, that we are astonished at the fertility of his pen. Nor did he, while thus engaged in preparing for the press, neglect any one duty, either in public or private, which, as a minister of the Gospel, he owed to his numerous congregation. His ministerial visitations, his diets of examination, and his preparations for the pulpit, were attended to with his accustomed punctuality. Such was the admirable manner in which he husbanded his time, and so well adjusted were all his domestic and official arrangements, that, besides discharging, with scrupulous fidelity, the duties of the ministerial office, and attending to the claims of friendship, he found leisure to pen volume after volume, with a dispatch, of which there are few instances to be found amongst the ministers of any church, at least in modern times. Though his works were almost all published in the humble form of a duodecimo, for the purpose of rendering them cheaper, and, of course, more extensively useful, yet the quantity of letter-press in each volume, will be found more than sufficient to fill three or four volumes of a fashionable novel. So fastidious was he in preparing his works for the press, that he seldom, if ever, permitted any one of them to pass into the hands of the publisher, without having written it three times over. Those only who have had some experience of the fatiguing nature of such an employment, can know how severely taxed both his bodily and mental energies

must have been, by such incessant application ; and they will not be surprised to learn, that his strength should have given way beneath the pressure of labour, so severe in itself, and so frequently repeated.

In 1832, he published a work on which he bestowed considerable pains, and which he himself regarded as the best of his publications. This was his “ Practical Exposition of the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism.” His original intention was, that it should be published in two octavo volumes ; and he had sufficient materials prepared for this purpose : but, afraid of marring the usefulness of it, by rendering it too expensive for common readers to purchase, he was induced to publish it, at first, in one duodecimo volume. The following year he published a volume of “ Select Essays” on various topics, religious and moral. Several of these had previously appeared in some of the religious periodicals ; but a large proportion of them were original. At the request of the friends of the late Dr Lawson, he prepared a biographical account of that eminent minister, which was published in 1833, along with a volume of the Doctor’s discourses, “ On the History of David, and on the introduction of Christianity into Britain.” A new edition of his “ Practical Exposition of the Shorter Catechism” being called for, he greatly enlarged and improved it, publishing it (in 1834), in two volumes instead of one. This was his last attempt at publication. While this second edition was passing through the press, a fatal disease had begun to make inroads upon his frame. Though he had left no other work behind him, but his “ Practical Exposition,” he would have been well entitled to the gratitude of the religious world. As a book fit for being put into the hands of young inquirers after the truth, and as peculiarly adapted for the domestic circle, it has few equals. The more it is known, the more will it be read and admired. When the first edition of this work was published, a respectable minister, connected with the Church of Scotland, labouring in one of the principal towns of England, sent him the following letter of thanks :—

“ REVEREND SIR,—Let me offer you my thanks for the able and engaging Exposition you have given of the Assembly’s Catechism. I have been looking about for a work of the kind, for some time, but scarcely expected an exposition combining so much interest with so much accuracy and brevity. I have just ordered eighteen copies of it for the Scotch school here, having been appointed to select new reading books, as chaplain of the school, and minister of the Scotch church, where the children attend. Satisfied that a heart which has discovered so much benevolence, will be gratified with this intelligence, I cannot resist communicating it. As the Exposition will be used as a reading book, light will thus be incidentally received, and the attention fixed on the Catechism, learned and explained at other times. May you be long spared to unfold and excite interest in the great truths of religion, through the blessing of God.”

When Dr Belfrage was laid aside from public usefulness, by the disease that ultimately brought him to the grave, he did not give up altogether his literary avocations. The habit of study and of writing had become a second nature with him. To renounce it, so long as any portion of strength remained, was impossible. The desire of promoting the spiritual interests of his fellow-men, operated powerfully within him. When he could no longer prepare volumes for the press, or deliver discourses from the pulpit, he still sent instructive papers to be inserted in the pages of the Evangelical Magazine. Some of these he sent only a short while before his death; and the last that he penned made its appearance in that periodical after he had paid the debt of nature. These concluding communications were accompanied by the following affectionate letter to the Editor:—

“ MY DEAR SIR,—It is your happiness to superintend the pages of a Work which has done more than any contemporary publication to fan the holy flame of love and charity among different sections of the professing world. Yours is, therefore, an honourable post; and I rejoice to know that your heart responds to the spirit and character of the journal over which you preside,

with so much honour to yourself, and so much advantage to the public. My mind was first drawn, with kindly feeling, to the interests of the Evangelical Magazine, by my most esteemed friend and brother, Dr Waugh, whose heart was the dwelling-place of gentle and tender affections, and who solaced himself with the thought, that there was at least one organ of periodical literature devoted to the interests of the Catholic Church. Go on, my dear sir, in your work of faith and labour of love; and though, in these conflicting days of the Christian Church, it may be impossible, with integrity, to pursue a strictly neutral course, yet let it ever be seen in your editorial career, that you follow in the footsteps of those venerated men who sleep in Christ, and who taught their generation how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

In addition to those works already enumerated, Dr Bel-fraghe had, in a state of complete readiness for the press, two volumes of lectures, which it was his intention to publish, but was prevented by increasing debility from carrying his intention into effect. He had also prepared, at the special request of one of his publishers, two small volumes, which, we believe, are at present in their progress through the press, and will ere long make their appearance; the one being a series of discourses on the parable of the ten virgins, and having for its title, "The Visible Church in the Last Days,"—the other consisting of discourses on the promises, and entitled, "Christian Instruction in Hope, in Warning, and in Example." As if his time had not been sufficiently occupied by the composition and publication of so many volumes, such was his extraordinary industry, that he occasionally spent some of his leisure hours in writing essays, sketches from fancy, and biographical accounts, several of which have been found among his papers, in a state nearly fit for publication.

Let it not be supposed that the subject of this Memoir neglected the work of the ministry, that he might acquire fame as an author. Fidelity, and diligence, and zeal, characterized him, in a high degree, as a minister of the Gospel.

The grand object of his life was to win souls to the Redeemer; and, in the accomplishing of this object, few ministers have been more successful. We shall now present our readers with some account of his ministerial labours and success.

Besides attending to the ministrations of the pulpit upon Sabbath, and visiting the sick during the week, the ministers of the different sections of the Scottish Presbyterian Church are required to hold diets of examination during the year, at which both the young and the old connected with their congregations are expected to attend; they are further required to visit, ministerially, all the families of their congregation, in succession, to pray with them, and instruct them in the doctrines of the Gospel, and to address to them such exhortations as may be suited to their varied circumstances, and to the relation in which they stand to one another. For the benefit of our southern readers, we shall state the particular forms that are ordinarily observed on such occasions.

When the minister intends holding a diet of examination in any particular district of his congregation, he gives public intimation from the pulpit, on the preceding Sabbath, that such a diet will be held for the families belonging to his congregation, who reside in that quarter, naming the time and place of meeting. On the day appointed, the meeting takes place,—consisting of heads of families and their children, and of other domestics. The number who attend is greater or smaller, according to the extent of the district, or according to the habits and avocations of the people. The meeting is opened with prayer; and sometimes with praise and prayer. The minister then calls upon the adult part of the assemblage to stand up, in successive classes, if they be numerous, and in one class, if they be few; but, for the most part, the men form one class, and the women another. A round of questions is first proposed out of “The Assembly’s Shorter Catechism;” and then a particular doctrine or subject is selected by him, on which he proposes a series of

questions to the persons standing before him, approving or correcting the answers which he receives, and explaining the different topics as he goes along. Having spent some time in this exercise, the adults are requested to resume their seats, and the children are called upon to stand up. Familiar questions are proposed to them, suited to their capacity ; and, after being examined, they are reminded to be upon their guard against sin, to fear God, to observe the Sabbath, to obey their parents, and to attend to all the duties of religion. After the examination of the whole is completed, the minister delivers an address to those who are assembled, the object of which is to urge upon them a more enlarged acquaintance with the doctrines of the Bible, and a closer walking with God in the observance of the ordinances, and in the cultivation of personal and family religion. The meeting concludes, as it commenced, with the exercises of devotion. These diets of examination are held annually, or at least periodically, in the several districts of the congregation, so that all the families have an opportunity of attending, if they are inclined.

The ministerial visitations are conducted in a manner equally regular and methodical. Public intimation is given on Sabbath by the minister, that he intends visiting on a day which he names, the families residing in a particular district of the congregation. In performing the visitation, he is usually accompanied by the elder who has the charge (under the Session) of the district. He enters each family in succession ; and, after the ordinary salutations are past, and all the members of the family, young and old, are assembled, he proceeds to ask questions at the examinable persons, in a manner similar to what he does at the diets of examination.* He then delivers a plain and familiar ad-

* The practice varies somewhat with different ministers in these family visitations. Some do not examine at all, in these visitations, but only exhort ; others examine the young, but do not examine the heads of the family. There are some who call upon every family, and pray with them, but do not exhort in each. They assemble two or more families into one place, and address an exhortation to them, when thus assembled.

dress, suiting it to the circumstances of the family ; and he communicates to the different members instruction, comfort, warning, or reproof, as the occasion may require. After the address, he offers up a prayer. By such visitations, recurring, as they do, sometimes at longer and sometimes at shorter intervals, the minister acquires an intimate acquaintance with the people of his charge. He knows the circumstances in which they are placed ; and is enabled to judge, both from what he observes and from what he hears, whether they are making progress in religion, or the contrary.

In many places, especially in towns, the diets of examination have been given up, in consequence of the people not choosing to attend ; though, in the country districts, and in the smaller towns, they are still observed with considerable regularity, especially among Dissenters. The ministerial visitations are, for the most part, punctually observed both in town and country. We make this statement chiefly in reference to the dissenting ministers ; as we are not sufficiently acquainted with the general practice of the ministers in the Establishment, to say whether they are regular in ministerial visitations or not.

With regard to the subject of this memoir, there have been few ministers, in any church, who have exhibited such a bright example of fidelity and diligence, in attending to all the duties of the sacred office, as he did. His congregation was large. It included in it a population of probably 2000 souls. Of these, upward of 900 were in full communion with the church. It was extended over a considerable district of country. Once a-year did he hold diets of examination in the several quarters of the congregation, which were attended both by the young and by the old ; and, once a-year also, did he visit ministerially *all the families* of his widely extended congregation, teaching from house to house. Two, and sometimes three days a-week, during eight months of the year, were devoted by him to these laborious parts of ministerial duty. He frequently left home at eight in the morning, and did not return till four in the afternoon ; and

he had occasionally extra meetings in the evening, from six till eight o'clock, in the session-house, with such of the work people as he did not find at home during the day. From November till the end of March, he was employed in examining and visiting in the town and villages; and, from June till the end of August, he was engaged in the country districts.

The manner in which he conducted his diets of examination and visitation, was peculiarly pleasing and instructive. For imparting interest to these exercises, and rendering them the sources of improvement to his people, he was eminently fitted by the gifts which he possessed. On one occasion, when holding a diet of examination at the village of S——, a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood was passing; and, observing the people flocking to the place of meeting, dressed in their Sabbath-day clothes, he asked a person whom he saw standing at a door, “What is doing here to-day?” To which the reply was, “It is a minister from Falkirk, who is examining to-day. They do not need stoves here, for this minister *warms all their hearts*.” The following extract is from a letter addressed to the compiler of this part of the Memoir, by a minister of the Gospel, who was trained up under Dr Belfrage:—

“I have often,” says the writer, “been present at his district examinations; and no one, I am persuaded, could go there without being highly interested. His people stood up around him, with the confidence of affectionate disciples; for his kindness of manner dispelled all their fears. He had a remarkable skill in suiting his questions to the capacity and dispositions of the several individuals he catechised. Instances of deep piety, enlarged Christian experience, and saving acquaintance with the ways of God, were thus discovered, which a less skilful or less gracious catechist would have failed to elicit.” “At one of his examinations in the village of L——, a young girl, in addition to the other prescribed exercises, repeated to him the whole of the texts of discourses that had been preached in his pulpit for the preceding year. This mark of youthful attention gave him so much plea-

sure, that others were induced to follow the beautiful example. He never failed to urge upon the young, in other places, such instances as this of uncommon diligence ; and it seldom failed to excite a spirit of holy emulation."

Another minister of the Gospel, who also was trained up under Dr Belfrage, writing concerning his pastoral visitations, says :—

" In this laborious but useful department of duty, Dr Belfrage has been equalled by few, and surpassed by none. Notwithstanding of the great size and widely-scattered localities of his congregation, he visited and examined them all once every year. It is indeed difficult to conceive how he managed to do this with such ease and regularity. Yet so regular was he, that the members could calculate upon the very week of his appearance amongst them. We have even heard it employed as a point of calculation ; for, if any thing happened at the period of the minister's visitation, it happened at a well known definite period of time. His custom, I believe, was to address in every house in the country. In the town, he called upon each family, and inquired into their circumstances ; and collected so many of these families into some convenient central place, and addressed them at considerable length. These addresses were distinguished for their appropriate, personal, and practical character. They seemed shaped for the circumstances of each family, yea of each individual. In no other duty did the Doctor excel more. His warmth of devotion told here mightily. The last address of the kind that I heard from him, was about three years ago, and was founded on Acts v. 42 ; " And daily in the temple," &c. As it was the winter in which I was taking license, I remember particularly the beautiful and touching allusions which the subject called forth in my own circumstances."

" I have yet," writes another correspondent, " the most vivid recollection of his pastoral visits to my father's family, in the days of my childhood ; and the anticipation of the minister's coming, on the morning of that annual visit, was ever a source of pleasure, instead of regret and fear. And I still remember, not without deep emotion, the warmth, and fervour, and particu-

larity, according to the different circumstances of those present, and the varying condition of the family, both of his addresses to us, and his prayers in our behalf. I cannot forget the anxiety depicted on the youthful countenances present, to obtain a place near to him (esteemed the post of honour), in the circle of children formed around his chair, or the kindness and affability with which he encouraged the timid; whilst he gently, but firmly, repressed the first indication of forward petulance, or the affectionate earnestness with which he addressed himself, in the simplest language, on the concerns of eternity, to the youthful heart."

In a letter to a friend, who had written to him making some inquiries concerning his visitations, Dr Belfrage says:—

" My visitations, about which you so kindly inquire, will close, as to the country part of my congregation, on Friday. Your beautiful reflections on that service, I shall carry in my heart in all my walks. They are pleasing scenes among a peaceful and affectionate people, as mine are. The only draw-back is the great fatigue which they occasion. I visit and examine every district of my large congregation every year. My father did so: and, though the increasing population of the country has enlarged the congregation considerably, I follow his example. Though urged by my friends to lessen my labour, I still go on; and my vigorous health fits me for a toil that would be oppressive to others. Old Mr Shirra, of Kirkcaldy, of whom you must have heard, used sometimes to say to his brethren, when urging them to hard service, ' It will not look the worse at the day of judgement.' "

Amidst his numerous avocations, Dr Belfrage paid great attention to the young in his congregation. He laboured hard to promote their spiritual interests; and he was much beloved by them in return. The writer of one of the communications above referred to, speaking of this department of Dr Belfrage's labours, says:—

" His class for the young was commenced at an early period of his ministry. He speaks of it, in the year 1819, as a thing he had for some time previously regularly conducted. Unwilling

to interfere with the parental instructions of the Sabbath evening, he made choice of Thursday, to meet with the young ; and, for two hours every week in summer, and in winter once every month, during the time of moonlight, he regularly assembled them in his large session-house, to promote their spiritual improvement. If a fair occurred in the town, on the day in question, he would have changed the night of meeting ; as he feared exceedingly to expose the young to the temptations or the dangers which such a scene might have presented. The number that attended might average about sixty. Sometimes as many as a hundred, and occasionally not more than thirty, might be present, according to the state of the weather, or the season of the year. But usually a regular attendance of about sixty or seventy might be depended on. The age of these young people was from ten to seventeen ; and the greater number were girls. They were not arranged into different classes, being all taught by himself ; but he suited his instructions to their several degrees of knowledge. For their use, he published three admirable catechisms, which have been found extensively useful, and have, it is believed, been singularly beneficial to the young of other congregations as well as his own. The first in order was a short and simple, but very beautiful catechism for the younger children. The second, called the ‘ Practical Catechism,’ was designed for the more advanced scholars. The third, and last published, was his ‘ Guide to the Lord’s Table.’ Besides these three catechisms, he sometimes used the ‘ Mother’s,’ as being well adapted for the younger children ; and the more advanced scholars committed to memory the ‘ Summary of the Principles of the United Secession Church.’ He assigned them also, each night, as an exercise, some doctrinal subject, which they were required to prove on the following night, by texts of Scripture, and by such reasons as might suggest themselves to their minds. The school was always opened with prayer. He then heard them repeat their questions ; after which they repeated a psalm or paraphrase, or perhaps a portion of Scripture. They then mentioned the text, and gave an outline, according to their several capacities, of the discourses which they had heard. After these exercises were finished, he would address them in a most tender and affectionate manner, illustrating the subject which they had been pro-

ing ; repeating some impressive anecdote ; and bringing home the glorious theme of Redemption to their hearts. Having finished his address, he joined with them in singing the praises of the Eternal, and committed them to the guidance of the Almighty, in fervent prayer."

Dr Belfrage had the happiness to know, that his labours among the young were blessed of God to not a few of his youthful charge. Many of them regarded him as their spiritual father ; and some of them, who were removed by an early death, gave satisfactory evidence, in their last illness, that they had profited by his instructions. In a sketch, which has been found among his papers, he makes mention of a young man, who had been under his ministry, whose calmness and holy fortitude in the views of death, were quite uncommon. " Seeing the agitation produced by grief in the friends who surrounded his death-bed, he mildly checked it, and, laying his hand on his breast, said, ' Why all this weeping and crying ?—all is peace here, and all is peace with God and me, through the blood of the cross. Precious blood indeed ! I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' To his father he said, ' If you cannot bear the sight of my suffering, retire to another room, and pray for me to God. I am trying to grasp his supporting hand, and to stay my sinking frame on the mercy of the Saviour.' " His mother, anxious to know what his views were of a better hope beyond the grave, tried to speak to him of what the Saviour had done for sinners. " Ah ! mother," he said, " can you think that, after being brought up under the ministry of Dr Belfrage, I can be ignorant of that ? "

Another instance of Dr Belfrage's success among the young, is to be found in the following communication, which was addressed to himself, and which could not fail to encourage him in his labours of love :—

" MY DEAR SIR,—I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, and, lest it should be deemed obtrusive in addressing you thus, I withhold my name. Yet, for your farther encouragement

in the work to which you are called, give me leave to mention the spiritual birth, in your congregation, of one young person, a female, who has in mercy been stirred up to make a special application of the grace of Christ, and rejoices in the dear hope of being accepted in the Beloved. Last Sabbath, she tells me, was a delightful day to her soul. Go on, and may you have many, many for a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord."

The following extract from a letter, which we have received from a correspondent, contains another pleasing instance :—

" In the village of L——, a young girl, of about thirteen or fourteen years of age, died a short time ago, to whose heart the holy instructions of this man of God, addressed to the young in his frequent meetings with them, appear to have been singularly blessed. The last illness of this young saint, was a triumphant proof of the power of true religion to support the mind under intense suffering. Young and old were edified in their visits to her sick-bed. It was a scene well fitted to confirm the believer in his hope, and to shake the sceptic in his vain speculations, to behold how this beautiful child could so tranquilly count the footsteps of approaching death ; how her eye alone beamed with gladness, when every other eye that beheld her streamed with tears ; how she could be the ablest to administer comfort, where, in the judgement of the world, she required it most. The secret of her resignation was,—she had found peace ; and she first heard it from her pastor's lips. To the instructions she had received in his ' Class for the Young,' she often alluded with a holy pleasure. She made them lift her out of bed, the last time he prayed beside her, that she might drink in every word he spake. In the days of her health and strength, she looked for ' the blessed hope,' and she died in the foretaste of eternal glory. She had drank of the wine of the Redeemer's love upon earth, and she was early translated to drink it new with him in His heavenly kingdom. While she was able to attend the house of God, her behaviour in the church was remarked by many. She could not spare one glance to see how others looked. Her eyes were intently fixed on her minister ; and, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, even so her soul seemed to pant after God. What an interesting ex

ample for the young to imitate, if they would know the ‘perfect peace’ of those who are precious in the sight of the Redeemer !”

The writer of this notice adds :—

“Many similar instances might be narrated, of hopeful piety among the young of his charge ; but they will be best unfolded in the great day of the Lord, when the hidden secrets of every heart shall be disclosed. In that awful hour, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and when the honoured head of our departed father shall be raised up, to hear his Lord’s acknowledgement,—‘Well done, good and faithful servant,’—few ministers, I am persuaded, of this or of almost any age, will be able to point to a greater company of ransomed ones, saying,—‘Here am I, and the children whom Thou has given me.’”

Every opportunity of doing good to the young, was embraced by Dr Belfrage. He called upon them, gave them good advice, and put proper books into their hands. A boy from the country (whose family Dr Belfrage knew), being apprenticed to a shopkeeper in Falkirk, Dr Belfrage sought him out, called for him frequently, gave him books to read, recommended to him suitable companions, and took, in general, a very deep interest in his welfare. Such kindness and attention struck the master so much, that he said, “I don’t wonder that Dr Belfrage is so beloved : he has watched over that boy with more than a father’s care.”

In visiting the sick, Dr Belfrage was most exemplary, and his attentions were not confined to the sick of his own flock, but he was ever ready, when called on, to give his sympathy and prayers to the afflicted of other denominations. Many miles did he travel, during the course of a week, on these errands of mercy. Frequently, when he set out upon such visitations, did he accomplish, before he returned, a circuit of ten or twelve miles. The gentleness of his disposition, and the kindness of his manner, peculiarly fitted him for ministering in the chamber of the afflicted and the dying. The prayers which he presented on such occasions, were distinguished for their beauty and tenderness ; they were also

most appropriate to the circumstances of the individuals whom he visited. To mourners in Zion, and to those who were smarting under trials, he was indeed a son of consolation : he knew well how to apply the cheering promises of the Gospel ; while to those who were careless about divine things, he addressed the language of faithful reproof. In dealing with men about the concerns of their soul, whether they were in health or sickness, he did not say " Peace, when there was no peace." He reproved, rebuked, and exhorted, with all long-suffering and doctrine.

Amongst his papers have been found some notices of persons whom he visited in their last illness. In the extracts which we now give from these papers, will be found a full confirmation of what we have stated, with regard to his affectionate and faithful mode of dealing with the individuals whom he visited. We behold him, in the instances referred to, acting the part of a skilful physician ; sometimes probing the wound, at other times administering the soothing draught, and at all times directing the attention to the only sovereign remedy.

"I have this day visited two persons, the most opposite in their feelings. The first was a man, whose manner had been harsh, who was quarrelsome in his temper, and severe in his conduct to those who were dependant on him. I found him labouring under a disease, which will soon terminate fatally, but most confident in his hope of eternal life, and uttering the exclamations of holy desire and rapture. Though I was aware it would neither be well received by him nor by his friends, I stated, that the fear of God was the best security against the slavish dread of death ; how horrible it was to be dragged from a refuge of lies into eternity ; and that all true reliance on the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, was associated with the love and the invitation of his meekness and gentleness. I besought him to pray for the Spirit of Christ ; for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. It is wicked to flatter in the pulpit, but it is still more so to flatter by the side of the death-bed.

"The other person whom I saw, was full of doubts and fears.

His life had been peaceable and friendly, but he had a tendency to gloominess and despondency, which deepened the shadows of death. I saw him trying to stretch out the withered hand. I heard him cry, ‘Lord, save me, I perish,’ and pointed out to him the arm of the Saviour, extended in mercy, and that blood flowing from His cross, which cleanseth from all sin. I have a good hope that all will be well with him, and that, though he has to pass through fire and water, God will bring him to a wealthy place. The end of a good man, it has been said, is peace; yet his passage is not always easy. When the believer reaches the haven of rest, it will matter little whether he hath reached the heavenly shore, wafted by a gentle breeze, or thrown on it by a tremendous wave.

“Alexander M. is getting some better. I called on him yesterday, and told him how careful he should be to improve the lengthening out of his time, and to follow up the impressions of his need of salvation, and his desire after it, which were awakened in his illness. This week I have attended the funerals of two aged persons in my church. I saw them frequently in their last days. Though they had laboured for a considerable time under the infirmities of a declining constitution, and were frequently debarred from sleep through breathlessness and coughing, they never uttered a murmur. Their remembrance of the word and ordinances was very solacing to them. The passages of Scripture which were brought to their recollection, were remarkably appropriate, and their kindness of heart was truly delightful. Old age has been called the season of selfishness, when the attention is engrossed with what they want, or suffer, or are about to leave. But these good old men felt as deep an interest in their friends, and in the churches, as ever. ‘Our best days,’ they said, ‘have been with you; but we shall have better days still in heaven.’ There is something peculiarly affecting in the grasp of the old man’s hand, and in the thanks and blessings which mingle with the farewell of the dying.

“I have this day paid my last visit to a young woman dying of consumption. Her first and only child was sitting smiling on the bed beside her. What a contrast betwixt his efforts to amuse her, and the unutterable tenderness with which she gazed on him. I heard her say,—‘How often have I blessed the name

of Jesus for what he has said about little children, and for what he did for them. I will die kneeling at his feet, holding up my babe to his mercy. Lord Jesus, I can leave him in no hands but thine.' She lifted up her hands and said,—‘O Father of mercies, bless thee now and for ever, my son, my son!’ I said,—‘God delights to fulfil a mother’s blessing, and his promises are fraught with grace all-sufficient for you. It has often blessed a parent’s death-bed,—I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.’

“Another young person, whom I visited, was dying of the same disease. She had sent to me to say, that she wished to see me, for the last time. Her mother was moistening her lips; and the young man, to whom she was to have been married, was sitting in deep distress near her couch. I heard her say to her mother,—‘O, trust in him who is the widow’s stay.’ She held out her hand to the young man, and, while he bathed it with his tears, said something to him about—‘one in Christ.’ After a short period, she seemed to gather a little more strength, and said,—‘Heaven is not the land of forgetfulness, though the grave is; and amidst its fulness of joy, it will be my delight to see you living in piety, and to meet you at the gate of our Father’s house.’ The Gospel alone can give such peace, and inspire such hopes; and how horrible must be the state of their heart, and how depraved their minds, who can condemn a religion which blesses the hour that nature leaves to darkness and despair. These young disciples had learned, with eagerness, the doctrine of Christ, under my tuition; and it was matter of my thanksgiving to God, that I had seen them exemplifying its grace, and in sickness and death bearing testimony to the power of its promises and hopes.”

We give another instance, extracted from a letter to one of his correspondents. After mentioning that he had been assisting in dispensing the ordinance of the Supper in a neighbouring congregation, he says:—

“Before I returned home yesterday, I went and saw a sick old woman, who had long been a hearer of my father’s, and who had been for some time under my ministry. She travelled every

Sabbath five miles to Falkirk, and she said, that in the stormiest day she never felt disposed to complain of the journey. When the church was erected near her, at A——, she joined it, and was an ornament to it, by her wisdom, meekness, and piety. I was very much struck with the power of religion, when I saw her last evening. She has been severely tried by the loss of children and grandchildren, and is suffering exquisite pain from a cancerous complaint, and cannot but anticipate what she has yet to endure in the course of that horrible disease, yet she was calm and resigned. The expressions of faith and hope, and pious affection, were most edifying. In the care of the Redeemer she reposed unshaken confidence; on His merit she rested all her hope; and to His fulness she looked for grace to suffer and for grace to die. Among other texts, she mentioned one, on which I had preached on the evening of the first sacrament after my ordination,—‘The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.’ All the way home, such thoughts as these passed through my mind:—Nought but religion could have produced such patience and such hope. How gloomy would her cottage have been without its light, and how intolerable her agony without its support.”

The following case of Judicial infatuation has been recorded by Dr Belfrage, at considerable length. We give the paper entire, as the perusal of it is fitted to be useful. The title of it is—“Judicial Infatuation:”—

“A striking instance of this (he says) occurred within the circle of my observation, the statement of which may be useful for admonition:—A farmer in my neighbourhood, who had been a regular attendant on the preaching of the Gospel, became intimate with a plausible infidel, who unhappily succeeded in alienating him from every thing serious, and in exciting him to an open and unqualified avowal of infidelity. When I heard of his danger, I went to him, and remonstrated with him on the immorality and danger of his conduct, and endeavoured to impress him with the grace and glory of the Gospel scheme of salvation, and with the wretchedness in which the unbeliever is left, without solace or hope, in horror of conscience, and in the prospect of eternity. He could say nothing in support of his views, which

could not easily be refuted ; but so obstinate were his prejudices, that no argument for the truth made any impression on him. In parting with him, I put into his hand Dick's ' Essay on the Inspiration of the Scriptures,' beseeching him to read it, with earnest prayer to God for light and grace from on high, and entreating him to consider his ways, and to be wise.

" Some time after, I went again to see him, and when he returned me the book, I asked him if he had read it through with care. He replied, ' Part of it,' and that it was needless to read more of it, as his mind was made up ; and, from what he said, slightly, of prayer, I saw that he was living without God in the world. I besought him, for the sake of his young family, and as he would not have their blood required at his hand, and for the eternal welfare of his soul, to quit instantly the refuge of lies to which he had betaken himself ; set before him the sweet peace and the blessed hope in trouble and death, which the faith of the Gospel yielded to the true believer ; and declared to him my solemn persuasion, that it was ' a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.' He expressed his conviction of my sincerity, but avowed his determination to stand or fall by the dictates of his own reason.

" I had no farther communication with him, and, as I have been informed, he died as he had lived. He was seized with cholera, and, after struggling with it for eight days, sank under the debility it had brought on him. I found that no symptom of remorse, or horror, or seriousness, had been manifested by him ; and his only solicitude was, that his body might not be raised from the grave, for the purpose of dissection. A little while before he died, he was observed groping with his hands around him, and being asked what it was that he wished, he said he wanted to see if the safe was all right (the contrivance employed for securing corpses in the grave) ; but not one syllable did he utter relating to his soul, except declaring, in answer to a question, that he was not afraid to die. I have passed by the lonely churchyard, where he slumbers, and sad were my reflections on a death without wisdom, and a grave without hope, and on the awful results of a man's rejecting the counsel of God against his own soul, and counting everlasting life unworthy of him ; and, in contrast-

ing his exit with that of others, whom I had seen deposited in that ancient repository of the dead, of whom I had the pleasing impression, that they were sleeping in Jesus, I felt that to be religious was the only course of safety, and that the faith of the Gospel was the only passport to a happy immortality.

“It is a striking fact, that an uncle of this person, who had adopted, and zealously maintained, very erroneous principles, was seized on his death-bed with great anguish of spirit. He said to a pious man who was visiting him, ‘When you die, you throw aside the stained garment of mortality, and will appear before God in the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, but I must stand before him loathsome with pollution; and in me Christ’s words must be verified,—‘If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.’ What affecting objects do two such death-beds exhibit,—despair without hope, security without fear. Oh, how different the death-bed of him who is filled with all joy and peace in believing, and abounds in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. I am not aware of his being addicted to any particular views for which those principles could be sought as a protection from the rebukes of conscience; but there were two circumstances which tended to strengthen him in his unbelief: The first was an impression, that to think differently on religion from the mass of mankind, indicated superior acuteness and information; and the other was the worldly and grasping spirit of persons around him, who professed a great delight in spiritual things, and talked much about another world, and any trespasses against moral honesty or good neighbourhood into which those who wore the form of godliness might have fallen. And this admonishes the friends of religion to see that their love to it abounds more and more, in all knowledge and in all judgement; and to beware of every thing which may give occasion to evil men to blaspheme that worthy name by which they are called.

“It shows, too, the falsity of the assertion, that it is by the gloomy dogmas of Calvin, and by its excessive austerities, that men are led to take refuge in infidelity. Though the minister under whose teaching the man sat for a time, shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God,—it was his delight to exhibit the Gospel as full of grace and truth,—to exhibit the beauty of the

Saviour, as meek, and gentle, and lowly in heart,—to show how the graces of religion were the blessing of families,—how its spirit was the impulse to integrity and mercy,—and how its promises were the solace of life's sorest evils, and a light in death's darkest gloom, yet did he regard lying vanities, so as to forsake his own mercy.

“And we are taught by this incident, how vain it is to expect awakening on a death-bed, and to indulge in error and iniquity, in the hope, that if we have done wrong, we shall be roused to repent, and turn from it before we die. Often is that threatening realized against those led away by the error of the wicked,—‘I also will choose their delusions, because, when I called, none did answer, when I spake they did not hear, but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.’ Let us then listen to the warning voice of Heaven: ‘Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge; now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.’ Happy, happy are they who, on good grounds, can say, ‘But we are not of those who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.’”

In addition to those labours of the Christian ministry, which we have noticed above, Dr Belfrage was a regular attendant upon the Church Courts. He was seldom, if ever, absent from a meeting of Synod; and though he did not often address the Court, yet he took a deep interest in all its proceedings. As a member of the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk, he was ever found at his post. He took a lead in all its deliberations; and, by the wisdom of his counsels, and the mildness of his spirit, he tended, in no ordinary degree, to promote its usefulness and respectability. For many years, he officiated as clerk of the Presbytery; and, by the kind and impartial manner in which he discharged the duties of his office, he secured the love and esteem of all his brethren. We have only to add, in concluding this review of his ministerial career, that his deportment, both in public and private, as a minister of the Gospel, was most exemplary,—and that, by

manifestations of the truth, he commended himself to every man's conscience. In all things he approved himself as a minister of God:—"By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

We know not whether Pollok, the Secession Bard, had the subject of this Memoir in his eye, when he drew, in his "Course of Time," the following picture of a faithful minister of the Gospel; but, assuredly, there is to be found, in the following lines, an exact counterpart of the character of Henry Belfrage:—

"Such was his calling, his commission such.
Yet he was humble, kind, forgiving, meek;
Easy to be entreated, gracious, mild;
And, with all patience and affection, taught,
Rebuked, persuaded, solaced, counselled, warned,
In fervent style and manner. Needy, poor,
And dying men, like music, heard his feet
Approach their beds; and guilty wretches took
New hope, and in his prayers wept and smiled,
And blessed him, as they died forgiven; and all
Saw in his face contentment,—in his life,
The path to glory and perpetual joy."

CHAPTER VI.

HIS DOMESTIC HABITS AND HIS CONDUCT AS A FRIEND.

Introductory Remarks. The Fireside of a Scottish Presbyterian Pastor. The Secession Manse. The Manse at Falkirk. Respect for the Memory of his Parents. His Fraternal Affection. Extracts from Letters to Mrs Belfrage. His Conjugal Affection. His Parental Affection. His Remarks on the Loss of his First Child. Letter intimating this Affliction. Birth of his Son. Baptism of his Daughter. Dedication of his Family to God. His Easy and Communicative Disposition. Letters to his Sisters. Conduct in Society. Domestic Habits. His Hours and Seasons for Study. His Charitable Spirit. Attachment to his Ministerial Friends and their Families. Anecdote. Extracts from Letters to a Young Friend in the Ministry. Letters to the Son of one of his deceased Brethren. Letters to Mrs Waugh. Letter to one of Dr Waugh's Daughters. His Excellency as a Friend.

IN the life of a Christian minister, there is rarely much variety of incident to attract public interest. His path lies in the retirement of sacred duty ; it is his to adorn the shade ; he exposes himself to suspicion when his *high place* is so ostentatious as to gather around it the heterogeneous flatteries of the men of the world. It is not easy to understand how the men of the world can continue to be pleased with a minister's performances, save at some expense, on his part, of truth and faithfulness. There is, however, a certain notoriety to which he may attain, unaffected by improper suspicions. The publicity, for instance, which such men as Dr Belfrage acquire, is not of the world, having less of the no-

tice of men, and chiefly the devout approbation of the pious. It is promotion in their own sphere, rising above religious consistency, and combining, in uniform excellence, the elements of "whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and honest, and of good report." This sphere, though retired, is extensive, and commands numerous, and, indeed, splendid occasions of reaching pre-eminent honours. Dr Belfrage knew well how to seize upon such occasions; and he has acquired the praise of making *usefulness* in his own profession the aim and ground of laborious exertion. He has thus become one of those great men in Israel, whose "works praise them in the gate." Eminence so attained, is not the mere creature of contingent popularity, but it is the influence maintained by the genuineness of worth, and of which the applause of men is the offspring, not the parent. The glory of the sun draws to it our pious contemplations; and though the clouds should sometimes obscure its light, it still retains its glory. We must look, then, for the causes of that *greatness*, which is the prerogative of the good, in the hidden life of the Christian, wherein operate those first principles, which, from being created and regulated by Divine grace, are occasionally evolved in those more illustrious virtues that stand in a similar relation to the world which they adorn, as such of the lights of heaven which we see, do to the sable firmament in which they roll. The character of Dr Belfrage, as it was illustrated in the various excellencies of his public and official life, has been amply delineated in the preceding chapters. We are now to contemplate him in the more limited, though equally interesting walks of domestic retirement, in which it will be found, that he lived under the control of the same pure and elevated motives, and that the excellencies which did appear to men, were the true and lineal issues of a life spent with God, and devoted to the pursuit and practice of undefiled religion, which in him, "before God and the Father, *was* this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The home of Dr Belfrage was distinguished by all that is peculiar to the fireside of a Scottish Presbyterian pastor. In the words of an elegant writer,* “to him, home was at once the scene of repose and activity, where he was the sun of a little system, the movements of which his influence controlled.” The manse was full of charms to his kind nature, and he associated with it the best and holiest scenes of his life. He was born in the manse,—he was trained under its roof,—and the fine and full features of his entire character were formed and developed under its mild and holy discipline. It was here that he was taught to relish so highly the pleasures of domestic life. The father’s house had been the Bethel at whose altar the son had vowed to serve his father’s God; and when he himself became the head of a family, he continued to “bless his household” and his people, by enforcing the doctrines he had been taught, and by exhibiting in his life the deportment of a Christian minister which had been set before him from his earliest days. To his training in the manse, indeed, the world is indebted for his chief excellencies; for there the embryo elements were moulded, and wrought up into those fair proportions which have long distinguished him as the model of a Presbyterian clergyman. As the Scottish manse is so intimately connected with the name and worth of Dr Belfrage, it may be proper, in passing, to give a short outline of what is peculiar in its domestic economy.

It is to be lamented, that genius should have debased itself in describing the interior of the manse as the scene of crime and hypocrisy. We would by no means affirm that the dwellings of our Presbyterian pastors are in every case the abodes of unimpeachable purity and honour, but we are safe in accounting any departure from the strictest rules of virtue, as an exception to their general moral and religious excellence. The true estimate of their character must be taken from the righteous lives of such men as Dr Belfrage, and never from the impure and disgusting descriptions of the

* Hannah More.

novelist. A Scottish pastor's fireside, associates with itself all that is sacred in religion and estimable in humanity. It is exactly the place where the principles of the one can be firmly rooted in the heart, and where the benevolence of the other, put under the wisest control, is regulated by the liberal discriminations of Christian charity. The rank which the Scottish pastor holds in society, is highly favourable to the impartial distribution of ministerial superintendence. But in defining particularly the rank of the *Seceding pastors*, it may be said that it is just high enough to secure the civil attentions of the more opulent, without being so elevated as to create a palpable separation between them and the humbler classes of the people, out of which their congregations are in general formed. They stand as connecting links between these extremities; and without belonging exclusively to either, are claimed as in some measure kindred to both. Their incomes are for the most part small, being sufficient to render secular traffic unnecessary, but so limited as to require the strictest economy, and an unassuming mode of life. Indeed, the comfort, respectability, and even humble elegance which appear in almost all the manses of the Secession, are truly remarkable, and have often excited the surprise of the observer. The manners of the pastors are grave, without lacking complacency, and their habits frugal, though easy and comfortable. To this state of things may be traced, the not inconsiderable influence which they have over the moral and economical habits of their people; for by it they are in some degree assimilated to each other, while it peculiarly fits them for exemplifying the sterner virtues of that godliness which, "with contentment, is great gain." This is as it should be. In the manse should be seen, in full operation, the principles enforced from the pulpit; and to the credit of the Seceding ministers of Scotland it ought to be admitted, that this is, in general, true of them. Their homes are the dwelling-places of amiable sentiments and Christian affections. The relative virtues of domestic life are there held in notable repute. There, the altar of God is

constantly established ; and upon it are laid, every morning and evening, the sacrifices of family devotion. It is when surrounding that altar with his household, that the venerable servant of God secures the reverence as well as the love of his children, and the love as well as the obedience of his servants. By constantly breathing the pure atmosphere of this domestic piety, he is, perhaps, the better fitted for wielding, with expertness and success, the weapons with which he fights as a good soldier of the cross. 'The savour of his religion at home, thus becomes life not only to the souls of that smaller circle of which he is the centre, but also to the different families of that more extensive sphere within which he is the "guide, and counsellor, and friend."'

It is no insignificant emblem of the union that exists between Christ and the Church, when the flock is animated to the various duties of Christianity, by observing the consistent practices of the pastor's fireside, and when their response rises in a sincere amen to the songs and prayers of the shepherd. It is interesting thus to reflect upon the share which the manse may have had in the preservation of that *moral feeling*, which is peculiarly strong among our own countrymen. Perhaps we have here a key to the just appreciation of the virtuous habits of the peasantry ; for it seems but just to ascribe these as much to the pastor's strict exemplification, as to his orthodox expositions, of Christian truth.

Amid such scenes, Dr Belfrage was nurtured ; and hence his delight in the recreations, and his finished performance of the duties, of the Manse of Falkirk. Hallowed by the recollections of his parents, who had passed their days and closed their lives within its walls, his chief gratification was to perpetuate and preside over a similar system of domestic arrangements ; so that no interruption came to the solemn devotions of the household, though its honoured heads were removed by death ;—their faith and holiness lived anew in the hearts and lives of their children, to whom Henry became at once minister and parent. He loved to study the deep things of God, in the same room where his father had

meditated, and to pay his vows surrounded by objects which reminded him of a mother's piety and affection. This was his prayer,—“Where her piety burned, let not mine be cold; where her penitence wept, let not my heart be careless; and where her compassion relieved, let not my bowels be shut.”* To his widowed mother he was, in truth, a son of consolation, and, as has been already noticed, he continued to watch over and honour her to the last. The deep impression which her death made upon his mind, will be beautifully illustrated, when, in another chapter, we present our readers with his annual meditations upon the evening of the anniversary of her death. So far from diminishing his affection for his sisters, the removal of their parent bound them all more closely together;—cherishing their memory, he became, to the end of his own life, the shield and protector of their orphan children. His attachment to them was truly great and lovely; and it was ever to him an important duty, either to contribute to their happiness, or, when affliction darkened their dwelling-place, to bind up their wounded hearts, and wipe away the tear from their eyes. When he left the old manse, to reside in the house he had built in Rose Park, he made no farther alteration in his domestic habits, than what was consequent upon his entering the marriage state. He was as attentive as he had ever been to the surviving members of his father's family, whom he continued to cheer by his society, and improve by his counsels. If he had been a dutiful son, and an affectionate brother, he now became an attached and faithful husband. The following extracts from letters written to Mrs Belfrage, will demonstrate at once the sincerity of his affections, and his admirable fitness to adorn the married life.

“*May* 6. 1828.—“I received, on Friday night, a letter from the Editors of the Evangelical Magazine, thanking me, in terms which I do not deserve, for my humble aid to their work, and requesting me, as the result of their unanimous resolution of the 19th *May*, to permit my name to be enrolled among them, in the place of the

* Dr Belfrage's “Incense of Youth.”

beloved Dr Waugh. My heart is affected with this expression of kindness, and with the idea of being singled out to take the part in this work, sustained by one whose memory I so fondly cherish. It was at Dr Waugh's request, that all my papers were sent. 'Henry, my good lad, mind the widows,' was the hint that always roused me; and I have this pleasing reflection, that an excellent person, and her family, have for several years received L. 5 annually, for my contributions. I lectured yesterday on the two last verses of the 8th chapter of the Romans, 'For I am persuaded,' &c. Most earnest have been my wishes and prayers, that the love of Christ may for ever rest on you, in all its power, in all its sweetness, and in all its blessings. In the afternoon, I preached from Isaiah, 33d chapter and 17th verse, and I cherished the hope, that you and I will go hand in hand in the way to the better country, glowing with the same spirit, conducted by the same guide, and looking for the same mercy. We have both of us friends in heaven, longing for our arrival, and that we may happily reach it, I trust our Redeemer is now praying. That sweet hope is suggested by his own words, 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me; for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.'

"With my most earnest wishes, that a redeeming God may for ever be your hope and your joy, I am," &c. &c.

"Rose Park, July 4. 1826.

"I rejoice with you at our young friend's deliverance, and I pray that God may strengthen what He has wrought for her. I trust you have not suffered by your kind ministrations. 'With the merciful, God will show himself merciful.' I finished my lectures, yesterday, on the 8th chapter of Romans, the two last verses. I will give you my concluding sentence:—In reviewing this chapter, how sublime does it appear in doctrine, how fervent in piety, how rich in comfort, how bright in hopes! The experience of this chapter is heaven in ordinances, heaven in duty, heaven in sufferings, heaven in death. 'Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord.' Most earnestly do I wish for you, my beloved friend, all

its consolations, and all its hopes. In the afternoon, I preached a second sermon on *Seeking the Lord*, with a special application to the Lord's Supper."

" *Rose Park, 23d July.*

"Dr Dick came on Friday. I lectured on the Sabbath forenoon, from the 9th chapter of Genesis. Dr Dick preached for me in the afternoon, on *regeneration*; and in the evening, in the parish church, the annual sermon for our Charity School, on that text, 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' It was a beautiful discourse, and enforced, in a very impressive manner, the importance of religious knowledge and principle to the young. His eloquence is calm, but mild and pleasing. The church was well filled, and the collection handsome."

"*September 4, 1828.*—I see by the papers to-day, that Dr Campbell is dead. He has been long laid aside from public duty, and time must have hung heavy upon his hands. I have often thought it a great privilege granted to some good men, that their life and their usefulness have closed together; and, like the sun, shining bright till it sets."

"*September 18, 1828.*—Yesterday I finished my illustration of the prayer, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.' I dwelt especially on the encouragements which we have in the grace of our Lord to direct to him that request; I said, 'human pity is oft without power to relieve, and weeps most bitterly when the case is desperate. Its tears fall in vain on the withering rose of youthful beauty; its sobs enter not the cold urn of death; but Jesus hath all power in heaven and earth, and can fully execute whatever is prompted by compassion.'"

"*August 1831.*—I then went and visited an old woman, entered upon her ninetieth year, who was prayed for on Sabbath. I was much affected by the lines of psalms she repeated to me; and, when she lifted up her withered hands, and said, 'I am trusting in Christ; I am an old helpless sinner, but He is able to save to the uttermost.' O the power of religion, which can thus bless in poverty, in frailty, and in death. How bright in the darkest hour of nature."

"*April 30, 1832.*—In my lecture yesterday on the cry of the souls under the altar, and the answer made to it, there was a

thought on which I dwelt, that the good in heaven are led to expect new additions to their society, and that their reunion with those of their friends they have left behind, is promised to them by their Redeemer, as a part of their happiness. O how gracious is that Saviour who thus gives eternity to the friendship of the good. Even the song of the Lamb will seem sweeter when sung with those we love, and the brightness of eternal day more enrapturing, when we walk with them in its light.

“ Among other sick to-day that I saw, was a young wife in consumption. She was sitting up in bed, pale and feeble, and a lovely child, of a year old, was sitting on the bed beside her. She seemed to feel she was dying; was eager to be led into the way of salvation; and the looks she gave to her infant, and the contrast between her tears and the prattle of the child, were most affecting. And now may the Redeeming Angel of the Covenant watch over you, and strengthen, and gladden you. In his care may you daily rejoice, and in his salvation may you be for ever happy.”

“ *September 1, 1832.*—To-morrow I lecture in Genesis, on Joseph’s marriage. I shall give you one note:—‘ Blessed is that home over which God presides, which heaven fills, which religion sanctifies, and which wisdom guides. In such a home the heart alone can rest.’ And now, may the peace of God, the mercy of the Redeemer, and the rich and sweet consolations of the Holy Ghost, be with you continually.”

The pure and ardent affection which breathes from these extracts (all that delicacy permits us to give), was prolonged to the end of his days. Nothing could exceed the delicate kindness of his attentions to his amiable partner; and it is but proper to state, that in her, he met with one ever ready to minister to his happiness, who appreciated his many and peculiar excellencies, encouraged him in all his schemes of usefulness and charity, and cordially mingled her own feelings and sentiments, with the piety and devotion of his life. The best balm for her afflicted spirit, must be in the reflection, that, while he lived, she was favoured of God to felicitate the lot of His servant, and crown his last days with the blessings and sympathies of domestic life. They who are

acquainted with the writings of Dr Belfrage, and especially with such of them as are intended for the young, need not be told, that his was a nature replete with parental affections. His love for his own children had all the peculiarities which characterized his interest in the young. Many were the prayers he breathed over their infant heads; and, if it had pleased God to spare him till they had reached maturity, he would no doubt have trained them sedulously to fear God, and merited in this, as he has done in other respects, the praise of the patriarch Abraham, “For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement.” His two little ones have been bereaved of their parent ere they could know his worth, or receive the benefit of his instructions; but we trust the God before whom their father did walk, will take them up, and make them a blessing to their widowed mother, and at last receive them into Heaven, to perfect that communion with their father, which, on earth, had scarcely dawned, ere it set in the darkness of the tomb.

The yearnings of parental love, regulated by the devout resignation of the Christian, are evinced in the following remarks, which were penned by him on the death of his first child, which happened immediately upon its birth:—

“In looking at such a babe, nature is apt to murmur, wherefore hast thou made this creature in vain? But is there not another world in which it has a place, and where it shall live for ever. There are plants so tender as to be unfit for the most sheltered spot under our inclement sky; and God, in mercy, takes them at once to Paradise. It is one of the wonders which Heaven will declare, how such babes were made vessels of mercy, and prepared for glory.

“If it is the first death in the family, let us endeavour so to profit by it as to be prepared for the next; for another and another will come. After the first chills of autumn, when the leaves begin to fall, you feel, as you mark them on the ground, how soon the greenest branch above shall be stripped bare, and shall

you not feel that for you there is no abiding, and learn to die daily? In such events, our Christian character is tried. Thus God tries our resignation to his will. This is a most difficult part of Christian duty. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God, is a lesson which it is good for us to learn; and to be able to say, ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’

“Let the parent, while engaged in committing to the grave, in darkness and secrecy, his lifeless infant, hear the voice that speaks to him amidst the solemn silence, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Let him remember that there is one eye upon him, which seeth in secret, and which looketh upon the heart. Let the prayer of faith arise, which lifts the heart from the dust to Heaven. Good men have felt, in such sad offices of love and duty, that of such a lonely spot, and such a lonely hour, God blessed them there.”

The disappointment of his hopes, at this time, deeply affected him; and the trial was aggravated by the severe illness of his wife. The voice of murmuring, however, was never once heard in his dwelling. Though he committed to the dust this object of his affection, late on a Saturday evening, he preached on the Sabbath following, in his usual manner; and the holy and humble expressions of his submission to the will of God, were deeply affecting. The following extract from a letter, written after this trial, will be read with interest:—

“The power of religion was most strikingly shown in her (Mrs B.), looking to the Lord in all her affliction, and in the resignation with which she bore the loss of her babe, which died in coming into the world. She meekly said, ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’ She is recovering slowly, but I trust surely; and she will experience the kind support of that Hand which hath redeemed her life from destruction. She weeps when she speaks of her babe; but they are tears of tenderness: and, while they are shedding, she blesses God for opening the kingdom of Heaven to little children, and for the hope that her infant is there.

“ You will easily conceive what a season of anxiety it has been to me. I have endeavoured to look to the hope of Israel, and to the Saviour thereof, in the time of trouble ; and every feeling of disappointment is swallowed up in gratitude to Him who has saved to me a life so dear. I preached the whole day on Sabbath. I was luckily prepared early in the week, and God made his grace sufficient for me. Let us have your prayers, my dear friend, that my beloved wife may be strengthened and comforted, and that this dispensation may be sanctified for our good. The Lord has made you to pass through many a trying scene in your family ; but his consolations have not been small with you ; and I pray God that you may receive an increasing anointing of the Holy One, for the joy of your own heart, and for the light and the happiness of your people.

“ Remember me kindly to Mrs H—— and your daughters. Long may the voice of rejoicing and salvation be heard in your dwelling ; and may our long and intimate friendship continue to bless us to the close of life, and be followed by eternal associations in the presence and joy of our common Lord and Saviour.”

“ Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” In June 1833, a son was born to him. If, on the former occasion, he had to drink the cup of disappointment, that which was presented to him now was not wholly a cup of joy. With the birth of his son came the death of his sister Mary. He thus alludes to these two events in a letter to the widow of the late Dr Waugh, of London :—

“ *Rose Park, June 19, 1833.*

“ MY DEAR MADAM,—As I know the kind interest you have always taken in my friends and myself, I feel myself called upon to write you as to the death of my sister Mary and the birth of my son. In these mixed dispensations of sorrow and of joy, we desire to recognize the hand of God, and to rejoice with trembling.

“ My sister Mary was long indisposed ; and though at times she suffered severely, she was singularly patient and resigned, and was blessed with a peace and hope which never failed her.

Her sisters feel the breach in the domestic circle very much ; but the consolations of God are not small with them, and to a loving Redeemer they look in hope, as to His mercy to themselves and to the resurrection of the just. It is delightful to think of what your much-loved husband used to call Christ's gathering-day, when the pious and the good shall be reunited in love and joy made perfect, and dwell for ever together in a home which no evil can reach, and where no separation can be known.

“ While I know you will kindly sympathize with such feelings, I am sure you will bless God with me for his great goodness to this dwelling. Mrs Belfrage was not long ill ; and she blesses, with lively gratitude, the softening and sustaining hand of the Father of Mercies. The little youngster is lively, healthy, and remarkably good tempered. Mrs Belfrage expects to be able to come down stairs in the course of next week. She wishes and prays that her little boy may be blessed with the spirit and image of Christ, and feels, that in his being a holy child, she will find her best reward for all her cares.

“ I heard from Mrs H—— last week, and was glad to learn from her that you enjoy some measure of health. I trust that God will, by the light of His mercy and kindness, continue to brighten the evening of your day ; and that when He calls you to himself, He will give you a gentle dismissal from earth, and a joyful welcome to Heaven, where you will find many friends waiting to receive you into everlasting habitations, and one beloved above them all.”

As an affecting instance of the fervent piety which he infused into all his domestic providences, and of the devout recognition of the Father of Mercies in the discharge of his parental duties, we give the following meditation, which he wrote on the morning of the day on which his infant daughter was baptized. The grace and delicacy of this dedication of his family to God are truly impressive :—

“ *Morning, October 23, 1834.*—This day, O Father of Mercies, I am to present to Thee, in baptism, my infant daughter. In thy grace and love, O look on her, and pour upon her thy Spirit to make her holy, and thy blessing to make her happy ; O, say,

I will be a Father to thee. Lamb of God, imbue her with thy meek and gentle spirit. I wish her, above all things, thy own image,—a place in thy bosom and heart,—in thy care and salvation. Let her, in thy mercy, pass sweetly and safely through the helplessness of infancy, and through every after period of life, and be, in thy good time, received into the kingdom and house of her Father. Wash her in thine own blood, and write the name of Jesus on her heart.

“For thy sweet mercy to our darling boy, I would bless thee with my whole heart. While we rejoice in his health of body, and in his faculties and kind affections opening so delightfully, we would recognise in this the watchfulness of thy care and thy condescending kindness. O make him, in all respects, what he should be; and, like the Holy Child, whom we wish him to love above all, may he increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Make him a credit to the name he bears, and a rich, rich blessing to his parents’ hearts.

“May the mother, with whom thou has dealt so bountifully, continue to share the exceeding riches of thy grace. Betroth her to thyself for ever; and may Emmanuel God with her be the light of all her steps, the guardian of all her interests, the comforter of all her griefs,—and, O, rejoice over her to do her good and bless her.

“Warned as I have been, that these infants may soon be fatherless, I would look to thee for grace to sanctify me wholly, and to give me fitness, comfort, hope, and mercy, for, and in all that may befall me. Under thy wings, O *Everlasting Father*, I would place these infants; and may the God before whom my father did walk, and the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, and who has fed me all my life long to this day, bless them, now and ever, and beautify them with thy salvation. To thee I would dedicate all that may remain of life to me; let not a moment be lost to piety. To me to live let it be Christ, and to die gain; for Christ’s sake. Amen.”

Domestic piety has had few lovelier examples than those which might be taken from the life of Dr Belfrage. The sentiments and feelings exhibited in these extracts, are rarely entrusted even to the friend of the heart, but are reserved,

perhaps too scrupulously, to be breathed, only in the most solemn moments, in the ear of Jehovah. They are unfolded here, to make known the beautiful harmony that existed between the public instructions and the secret godliness of the subject of this Memoir. It has been said by persons under the rod of affliction, or the stroke of adversity, that, while themselves untried, it is easy for ministers to discourse upon the duty of humbly acquiescing in the will of God. It is true the hour of trial brings to the test the best professions, and proves that some may be rigid in enforcing the duty of resignation, who cannot themselves exemplify it. Of Dr Belfrage this cannot be said. No man could be more impressed than he was, with a sense of the Divine sovereignty, and with the conviction that the equanimity and resignation of the Christian under the rod, are never better sustained than by the firm belief that "all things work together for their good who love God." So uniform, indeed, was the holy influence of religion upon his heart, that little external difference could be observed upon him, either in the season of joy, or in the hour of grief. You behold this good man in the same attitude of profound adoration, whether he stands in the silence and darkness of the night, over the grave of his first born ; or, in the happier light of the morning, dedicates, at the baptismal font, his infant daughter to the care and service of the benevolent Creator.

It may be thought that, from the serious nature of his studies, and the peculiarly solemn character of his writings, Dr Belfrage would not be an inviting or cheerful companion. Such a thought is injurious to the blissful tendency of a religious life. Of Dr Belfrage, it may be said, that he spent his life in the "ways of pleasantness," and "in the paths of peace." He was happy in himself, and he loved to contribute to the happiness of all around him. He cordially enjoyed the society of his friends, whether he met with them abroad, or under his own hospitable roof. He was amused by the sallies of innocent wit, and not unfrequently indulged himself in a little pleasant raillery with his more intimate friends. He greatly delighted in lively conversation, though

he sometimes exhibited signs of impatience under the lengthened infliction of a prosing visitor. He was at all times easy of access; and, when any of his family entered the library, even though deeply absorbed in study, he received them with a smile of welcome; laid aside his book or his pen; and, with some good humoured remark, persuaded them of his delight in their presence. He even condescended to notice to them the particular subject which he was premeditating for the Sabbath, or alluded to the work which he might be preparing for the press. Nothing, indeed, could be more winning than was his kindly communicativeness to his friends. Some, less gifted than he was, and with less reason to act the part of the recluse, have thought that it enhanced their importance and worth to wrap themselves in the garb of austerity, and commune with their spirits alone, as if condescending familiarity at the fireside conferred too much honour upon those whom they should regard incapable of sympathizing with them in their intellectual pursuits. This is a poor compliment to those who have the best claims on their respect, and defrauds them of the opportunities for mental improvement, which, from their free and domestic character, are perhaps the best fitted to excite and cultivate the understanding. Reserve and distrust among the members of one household, endanger the ties of family union, by rendering it necessary for the inmates to seek that communion abroad, which should have made home the centre of social attractions, and by leading them to waste the loveliest sympathies of our nature upon the unprofitable and suspicious fellowship of the world. On the other hand, wherever there is the nourishment of generous and confiding intercourse, there the domestic affections, even in somewhat unfavourable circumstances, are strengthened and kept alive. “A domestic society, bound together by these principles, can retire, as it were, from the haunts of men, and retreat within a sanctuary where the storms of the world cannot enter. When thus met in the interchange of mutual affection and mutual confidence, they present the anticipation of that period, when,

after the tumults of life are over, they shall meet again, no wanderer lost, a family in heaven." *

The following extracts from letters to his sisters, though simple in themselves, will illustrate the free and open temper of Dr Belfrage, and show that he could unbend to win the affection of the heart, as well as the tribute of the judgement:—

“ *Ful Kirk, December 30, 1819.*

“ MY DEAR J——,—I hope you have caught no cold since you went to Edinburgh, and that you feel yourself comfortable. We often think upon you, and especially when I come down at night I miss you. I hope that you will live near to God, and that He will give you all the wisdom, and grace, and comfort that you may stand in need of. We are all quite well, and B—— exerts herself to amuse me very much when I am tired, and when I come home at night fatigued with my labours. Yesterday was one of my heaviest days; but I never saw a more beautiful winter day, and it rendered my task pleasing. I have been preaching all the four Sabbaths of December, on Ecclesiastes, 12th chapter and 1st verse. I handled it in a way to make it interesting to all; and last Sabbath I said a good deal about the unfitness of old age to begin the culture of piety, and the consolations which religion must give in the evil days. You will hear from W—— my account of the funeral of your cousin Jane R——. She was very amiable and good.

“ Your sisters have got *Ivanhoe*. We have read the first volume. It is quite in the style of *Marmion* and *Rokeby*; and the character of a Jewess that is drawn in it, is exquisitely finished. We had a Jew in our church one day lately; he had come from Liverpool. I lectured, in the forenoon, on the first eight verses of the 90th Psalm; he was much pleased with it. In the afternoon, I preached on the centurion's testimony at the cross, Mark xv. 39; but he probably found this not so palatable, and wished to resist the conviction it was exciting, for it was observed by the family he was with, that he was employed all the time of the sermon in turning over his Bible, and reading places here and there in it. It is melancholy to think on the ob-

* Dr Abererombie on the Moral Feelings.

stinacy of their prejudices in that course of unbelief, which has entailed such misery on their nation.”

“ *Falkirk, February 18, 1820.*

“MY DEAR E——,—I was much gratified by your letter to-day, it was so very good, and so very kind. I have been very anxious about you, but God has taken care of you, and will continue to do it. I have wearied very much for you here; yet, if you are well and happy in Edinburgh, I will bear it the better. I will be in Edinburgh in three weeks, if I go to Slateford, to see you. I am much pleased with my uncle's picture. We will hang it in the drawing-room, below mine. I have sent, with this, a letter of thanks to my aunt. I have been very busy with my public labours since you left us. After my visiting Lauriston, on Friday, I went to ——, to marry the two Misses ——. The bridegrooms are two merchants in Falkirk. I gave the vow to the oldest first. I was obliged to stay supper, and came home very tired, in the first chaise. When visiting Stenhouse Muir, I was in Sir William's. The family are in Edinburgh. The servants, who have the charge of the house, are my people. There are a great many good rooms in it. I saw the pictures of all the notable persons in the family, huddled into a corner. What was once gazed on with interest and delight, is now left to dust and the moth.”

“ *Falkirk, February, 1820.*

“MY DEAR J——,—I was very much pleased with your kind letter to-day. I am happy to say that this morning, when I awoke, I found the pain and stiffness almost gone. I am quite easy now, and I hope will not be troubled with it again. I gave my lecture on the 82d Psalm, last Sabbath. I have prepared a sermon for next Sabbath,* on Isaiah vi. 1; ‘In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.’ It is curious, that Uzziah reigned longest of any of the kings of Judah, and that he was shut up from the world some years before he died, and his son managed the kingdom for him.

“——— was mentioning, that Dr Dick, whom he heard last Sabbath, preached on that text in the Lamentations, iv. 20;

* George III. died about this time.

‘ The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits, of whom we said, under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.’

When Dr Belfrage mingled in society, he equally maintained polite attention and self respect. He never lost sight of his office. When he relaxed, he was wisely cautious of that unbecoming levity which might lessen upon his family or his people the influence of the pastoral character. It was never forgotten, in his presence, that he was a minister of the Gospel. In him were happily blended, the dignity of the upright and the gentleness of the meek, so that, while his displeasure was feared, his good opinion was steadily cultivated. A stranger might have thought this feature in his character as indicative of high-mindedness, or, it may be, of a haughty temper. They never knew Dr Belfrage who could put such an uncharitable construction upon the dignity of his external deportment. He never made any but the immoral feel inferiority in his presence. He was often found paying the most polite attention to those whom he might have neglected to notice, without incurring any displeasure ; and so far was he from supposing that such complacent familiarity detracted from his influence, or cast a stain on his love of letters, that he rather sought in it to give the best impression of the amiable tendency of sacred literature, and to foster a love of the truth, by maintaining, as one of its disciples, the meekness and lowliness of the great Master. Acting upon this rule, he never carried the *reserve* of the student into the parlour, or before the public, but sought to preserve the safe and pleasant medium, wherein the full credit of his piety might be sustained amid the pleasantness and peace of its shining path.

In his domestic habits, Dr Belfrage was remarkably frugal of his time. The account which has been given, in another part of this biography, of the variety and number of his labours, is sufficiently demonstrative of this. He disapproved of visits of mere ceremony, and accounted a day so

spent a total loss. To every day he apportioned its peculiar duties. His pastoral labours and pulpit preparations filled up the most of the week. Upon Saturday he generally composed his lecture, and mandated both it and the sermon he had previously written for the Sabbath afternoon. He devoted the months of spring and autumn to the improvement of his mind in general reading, and to the preparing of his works for the press. To this latter branch of labour he frequently devoted five days in the week, and ten hours each day. These, however, were among his happiest days. He certainly did sometimes complain of the immense fatigue of writing over his works for the press. In most cases, as has been stated in the preceding chapter, he did this *three* times, which produced extreme exhaustion, so that he was wont to say, "*this more than any other labour grinded down a man's strength.*" In these seasons, he used to walk out for exercise between dinner and tea; and if the inclemency of the weather prevented this, he sought relaxation in lighter reading, or in cheerful conversation. Had it not been for the careful manner in which he thus husbanded his time, it would have been impossible for him to have performed such an amount of useful and laborious exertion for the interests of pure and undefiled religion. The portions of his time which were devoted to private and family devotion, will be noticed in a subsequent chapter.

There is one feature in the domestic character of Dr Bel-frage which demands especial notice, because it was studiously hid from the world, viz. the deep interest which he took in the case of the poor and the destitute. Some have been so uncharitable, as to doubt concerning the extent of his Christian beneficence. His charity, however, was not the less extensive from his quiet and unostentatious mode of distributing it. The portion of his income which he allotted to this purpose was very great. The lamentation caused by his death has elicited expressions of gratitude from numbers whose necessities he had relieved, and has partially raised the veil which modesty had hung over the benevolence of

his life. It was his custom, for instance, when he went out to visit either the sick, or any particular district of his congregation, to carry with him a sum of money ; and he seldom returned home but with an empty purse. In taking leave of the sick or destitute, he would shake them kindly by the hand, placing a piece of money in theirs as he withdrew his own. Of Christian charity, indeed, he had very strict notions, regarding it as by no means optional, but a bounden duty ; and that he might impress it by practical lessons on the hearts of his family, he occasionally made them accompany him in his visits of mercy, and allowed them to be his almoners. He was also careful, on his return from scenes of distress, to remind them of their superior comforts ; of the gratitude they owed to God ; and of the sympathy they should entertain for the poor and friendless. He had no toleration for the excuses of the penurious ; and concerning that one which is often urged about the over-frequency of charitable demands, he remarked, “ in all my experience I never knew any person hurt his interest by giving too much,”—a remark which may be received either as a satire upon the too general niggardliness of mankind, or as a truth expressive of the profitableness of Godly charity, for “ there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.”

The heart of this excellent man was the abode of faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these was his *charity*. His life was regulated upon this great first principle of Christianity. The welfare of his fellow-men as to temporal, and especially as to spiritual and eternal things, lay near to his heart ; and hence arose his vast labours for the improvement of the young, the security of the middle-aged, the comfort of the old, and, in general, for the growing graces of the believers in Jesus. To the same cause, also, must we trace the freshness and the activity of his mind and affections to the very last. Sustained and moved by such Christian philanthropy, they could not easily flag ; and thus, there will be found as much of nerve and life in his latest, as characterized his earliest publications. So true are these observations of

Mr Douglas,—“ the only way to keep up the freshness of the affections, and the youth of the heart, is to let them freely flow over the activities of life, and, from action, to circulate back to their fountain-head, that the stream of benevolence may issue and re-issue from the heart in a ceaseless circle.”*

This may be the proper place to notice a truly lovely feature in his Christian benevolence, which is not generally known even among his friends and admirers. Dr Belfrage felt strong sympathy for those of his brethren in the ministry, who, from the smallness of their congregations, were in straitened circumstances. To his praise let it be recorded, that besides other acts of beneficence, he set apart the whole profits of some of his publications for their relief. In a letter to the late Dr Waugh, in which he begs his acceptance of a copy of some of his works, he says, “ I may mention to you, that if any profits arise from this book, it is my intention to send them privately to two or three ministers whose families are large and whose stipends are small !” He was, himself, placed by a kind providence, in easy circumstances, but he was not the less mindful of his poorer brethren. He considered the many claims which are made upon the hospitality of the pastor’s fireside, and upon his limited income, by cases of charity in the congregation, which delicacy forbids to make public, together with the expectations created from his office of the general respectability of his own family’s appearance in society, and could fully sympathize with them under the efforts they were obliged to make with their scanty means to honour such obligations. It must be recorded also, to his praise, that the widows and orphans of his deceased brethren continued to be the objects of his peculiar care. Such families have been deserted in the days of their mourning, by the very individuals who should have been the last to withdraw their protection ; and thus the minister’s widow has often wondered, whither have fled the friends and associates of her husband, and his children have looked in vain

* Truths of Religion.

for the countenance of those who partook most freely of their father's friendship. Far, very far from Dr Belfrage was such unfeeling conduct. The death of his friend only bound him more closely to the interests of the survivors, whom he made it his duty to seek out, and, by proofs too precious to be unappreciated, to convince of his affectionate regards. How beautifully illustrative of this, is the interest he took in the *Evangelical Magazine*, to which reference has been already made. He wrote for its pages, that he might have some claims upon the profits, which are devoted to the widows and children of evangelical ministers; and, by his kind applications to the Directors, several ministers' families have been very seasonably benefitted out of these funds. His eye, indeed, used to beam with delight, when he met with the son or daughter of a departed brother; and, wherever their future lot in life was cast, his prayers followed them, for their happiness and success. A simple instance of this kind, out of many that might be noticed, may here be stated:—A young boy, the son of one who had been among his most intimate friends in the ministry, had come to Falkirk, on his way to Glasgow University. Through a mistake as to the hour of the sailing of the canal boat, he was obliged to remain in Falkirk over the night. He had never been in the town before, and the only person of whom he knew any thing, was Dr Belfrage. He remembered the days when the Doctor used to come about his father's house, and especially some kind expressions of friendship, which appeared in the *Memoir* he had written, out of respect to his father's memory; and he resolved to test the hospitality of Rose Park. The lad, somewhat timid, was shown into the library, where Dr Belfrage was sitting. Upon announcing his name, and the place of his birth, he received an instant and cordial welcome. The good man's eye was moistened, while he traced the resemblance to the father in the features of the son, and spoke of the many endearing excellencies of his former friend. Though a mere youth, he devoted the whole of the evening to the lad's amusement, condescended to con-

verse with him about his own literary pursuits, and even brought out the manuscript of a work, which had just been published, and explained to him its contents. In the morning, he gave the boy, who had no acquaintances in Glasgow, a letter of introduction to one of his most valued friends, conducted him a little on his way, gave him many pious and prudent counsels, and expressed his hope that he would soon return to Rose Park, where he should always be welcomed. “Thine own,” said he, “and thy father’s Friend, forsake not.” Many years afterward, this young person became a minister in the same church with Dr Belfrage, who never failed to act toward him as a father and a guide. In a letter before us, we find him thus apologizing for not consenting to introduce his young friend to his charge, on the first Sabbath after his ordination :—

“On many accounts, it would have been most pleasing to me to have introduced you at K——; but I am kept from it by engagements which I have already made. You will enter on your ministry, with the earnest prayers of all your father’s friends, that your labours in the Gospel may be a blessing to the Church, and a happiness to yourself; and could that truly holy and amiable servant of Christ speak to you from the place of his rest, it would be in the words of Paul, ‘Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.’ By mildness and suavity, your congregation will be easily managed. The memory of your father will be a shield to you, and I have no doubt but you will have the countenance and aid of your father’s Lord. * * *

The engagements which I have in the month of July, will also prevent me from being with you at your first Sacrament; but I will, with much pleasure, be with you on the Fast-Day before it. That new service will bring to you, I trust, additional experience of the riches of that grace, which delights to aid every pious effort, and which has often made a minister’s first Sacrament a blessed season of holy advantage.”

The following letters were written to the only son of another of his deceased brethren, who had, at the age of twelve, requested him to become one of his curators, for the super-

intendence of his patrimony and education. They breathe all the spirit of the father:—

“ *Falkirk, December 26, 1827.*

“ MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I received your letter, and read it with deep interest. I am quite willing to act as one of your curators, along with my friend Mr B——, and will be most happy to do any service in my power for you. I had a great regard for your excellent father, and I often remember his modest piety, his holy wisdom, and his calm and his gentle manners. It will be a high gratification to me, and to all his friends, to see his son treading in his steps. This will be the sweetest consolation of your mother’s heart, the noblest tribute to your father’s memory, and the best security for your own happiness.”

“ *Falkirk, July 13, 1831.*

“ DEAR J——,— I would have written you sooner after the death of your aunt, but my time has been very much occupied with various duties. The sad event would affect you much, but you saw it brightened by the influence of religion; and this, I trust, will endear the Gospel, and the living Redeemer it reveals, more strongly to your heart. Your aunt died in the Lord, and such was the happy result of her life of faith on Him. That grace, which was so abundant to her death, is all-sufficient for all the duties and trials of life, to your mother and you.

“ Do not let your mind dwell on the dark side of the cloud, on what is gloomy in death to nature; but think on the light from on high, which visits the failing eye; on the rest in God, which is felt by the struggling heart; on the gracious care of the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and to whose life and love there can be no end; and on that happy meeting, which pious connexions will soon have, in that world, where they will share together in their Saviour’s joy, and magnify the grace which made them one on earth, and, after all life’s sorrows, and the separations of death, made them one again in heaven.

“ I hope you are pursuing your studies with diligence; but take care of your health. In the chamber of study, in the solitary walk, and in the darkness of night, the idea of God’s presence will cheer, while it awes. Seek from Him light in all that perplexes you, and grace to fit you for His service, and entreat

Him to enable you to live to Him, and to die to Him. What can be so desirable as a life which He fills with wisdom and holiness, and a death which he blesses with hope and peace."

"Falkirk, October 9, 1834.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have delayed sending the parcel till I had supposed you had returned home, and I beg your acceptance of it, as a small token of the regard I feel for you.

"I cannot but embrace this opportunity of repeating how deeply I feel the kindness of your very splendid present. Mrs Belfrage is charmed with it, and especially with the amiable disposition which it indicates; and, at her suggestion, when we go to Edinburgh, we will get an inscription put on it, as the gift of youthful gratitude and friendship.* She regretted it was not in her power to thank you in person, but bids me say, that she will be happy, if God spare us, on your paying us a visit in the spring, and in showing you every attention. If I am with Dr B—— in April, I will then fix the time with you for your coming to Falkirk.

"Be assured, my dear young friend, that the highest gratification I can feel respecting you, will be to see you distinguished by the best wisdom, by the modesty and kindness of your father's spirit and manners, and by the mild sanctity which adorned his life. Look up in earnest prayer, and in humble hope, to Him who is the Father of light, that He may fill you with the knowledge of His will, and that, as the God of all grace, He may enrich your heart and life by its influence. May your studies be guided by His counsel, your labours prospered and sweetened by His blessing, and your lot crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

After the venerable Dr Waugh "was gathered to his people," Dr Belfrage never for a moment suffered his friendship to abate for the family of Salisbury place, where he had been so hospitably treated when in London. In times of affliction, he was ever ready to mingle his tears with theirs, or to rejoice with them in their prosperity. A few months af-

* He refers here to a token of gratitude, which his young friend had given him, on reaching his majority.

ter the death of his revered father and friend, he thus writes to the mourning widow :—

“ *Falkirk, March 7, 1828.*

“ MY DEAR MADAM,—Had my much loved friend been still on earth, he would by this time have been reminding me of his request, that I should send a paper for the Evangelical Magazine. His wish I feel sacred in my heart, and I have sent one with this, which James will put under cover, and send to the Editor, Mr Morison of Brompton.

“ Three months have passed away since your venerated husband went to the Father, and not a day has there been in which my heart has not blessed his memory, and melted in sympathy with you. I trust the Redeemer has sent to you the gracious comforter, by whose influence the sad are cheered, and the bleeding heart is formed to resignation and hope. You have the solacing reflection, that you were, for a long course of years, a ministering angel to the happiness of one so eminently a man of God, and that you are surrounded by a family glowing with the spirit of piety and kindness. Soothed by their affectionate care, and guided by the hand, the gentle hand, of your Redeemer, you will go in peace into that better world, where you shall be reunited with him whose loss you now mourn, and where love is ever felt in its sweetest power, devotion in its highest elevation, and happiness in its purest rapture. My sisters beg me to present to you and your daughters the assurance of their kindest sympathy. Amidst the many recollections of Salisbury Place, which I shall carry with me to the grave, there must always mingle a high respect for your worth, and the warmest gratitude for your kindness.”

“ *Rose Park, December 24, 1834.*

“ MY DEAR MRS WAUGH,—I cannot but embrace the opportunity of my friend Dr H—— going to London, to write you, to assure you of the affectionate interest I take in your comfort. I was truly happy to learn from Mr R——, when I saw him in September, that you were so graciously sustained by your God and Saviour in your season of loneliness and infirmity ; and I often think on that text, in reference to you,—‘ Jesus having loved His own that are in the world, loves them to the end.’ There can be no change in his heart, no intermission in his care. He

will gently lead you to your everlasting rest, where the friends, whose memory you fondly cherish, remember you with more than wonted kindness, and are waiting to receive you into their blessed habitations.

“ I was very unwell last spring and summer, but am now, through God’s great mercy, in my usual health and vigour. Mrs Belfrage is quite well, and bids me say how much she respects you, and that it delights her to hear of your welfare. The two children the Lord hath given me, are thriving in all respects. Our little boy is frank, lively, and kind. He knows Dr Waugh’s picture, and, when we ask who it is, he points to it, and says, ‘ Dear man.’ It will be one of his earliest lessons, to venerate the memory of so beloved a friend. Had he been still on earth, he would have added to his toast, ‘ The children and the shrubs at Rose Park.’ ”

The following was addressed to Mrs H——, one of Dr Waugh’s daughters :—

“ *Rose Park, January 3, 1832.*

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot begin this letter in any other way, than by expressing how deeply I felt the kindness of your last letter. It came to this dwelling while in darkness and sorrow, and we found ourselves relieved by its sweet and tender consolations. Mrs Belfrage felt peculiar interest in it. She delights to speak of you, and she loves you as a friend. She is now in her usual health, and has been strengthened from above, to bear her trying disappointment in meek submission. She has been enabled to look through the tears of nature to the throne of grace, to believe the loving-kindness of the Lord, and to hope in His mercy.

“ Your brother wrote me after the death of your uncle. What a worthy man he was ! with dispositions so benignant, with manners so mild, with hospitality so kind, with piety so humble, and with integrity so steady, he was the object of affectionate respect to all that knew him. You will recollect, my dear friend, that his was the last house we were in when I was leaving London, and how we waited, till we could tarry no longer, for his return. To that dwelling my thoughts have often gone as a place adorned by the meekness and the gentleness of Christ, and blessed with the

peace of God. I wrote your mother after I got the intelligence, and am expecting to hear from your sister or brothers how she is bearing up under so many bereavements, and under the advancing infirmities of age.

I have sent you with this a copy of my Exposition of the Catechism, which I trust you will accept as an expression of my regard. There is, from the nature of the subject, less imagination in it than in some of my other works, but I trust it will not be without utility as a book of pious instruction. I have found my mind withdrawn, by the labour of it, from melancholy musing; and whatever may be its reception with the public, I have done what I could to make it a book to teach wisdom and devotion, integrity and kindness, in the lessons of families, and in the intercourse of life.

“ We have felt in this town, the dread of cholera, as in other places; and, when I heard of it as at Newcastle, and now at Haddington, it struck me that the cloud which seemed at first no bigger than a man’s hand, would soon cover our sky with blackness. We had a day of thanksgiving last week for the harvest; and, with it, we mingled humiliation and fasting for the frowns of Providence, and for the abounding iniquity in the land. It was our earnest cry to God, that He would in wrath remember mercy; that He would turn again, and have compassion on us; that He would hide us in His pavilion, in the day of evil, and form us to the righteousness which exalteth a nation. How happy are they who, in faith and love, can leave it to Providence to order every circumstance of their lot, and every incident of their lives, for His glory and their good. To them no cloud is fraught with wrath, who walk as children of light, and no event is unwelcome that comes from the Hand of Mercy.

“ I am still lecturing on Genesis, and am about to begin the history of Joseph. I am lecturing also, every alternate Sabbath, on the Revelations, and am at present engaged with the fifth chapter. This is a book which will especially reward patient and prayerful study. It has been degraded by visionaries, but it is rich in the grandest views of the mysteries of Providence, the triumphs of Christ, and the glory of Heaven.

“ Now, my very dear friend, write me *very soon*. Remember me kindly to your excellent husband, whom I esteem very highly,

and to your dear little girls. Tell them they have a friend at Falkirk, who loves them for their mother's sake, and who prays for them, that they may be wise, and good, and happy. Remember me also to Mr B——r, to whom I will write very soon. May the kindest blessing of Heaven rest on you, and all you love, and believe me to be, yours, with much esteem and respect,

“ HENRY BELFRAGE.”

The attentive reader of this Memoir must have been convinced, long ere this, of the admirable fitness of Dr Belfrage to perform the duties, and appreciate the advantages of genuine friendship. His friendships were really treasures to him. They were the “sweetness of his life;” and he looked upon every thing that had the slightest tendency to interrupt or ruffle the smoothness of their course, with decided aversion. We do not say that his friendship had in it any excellencies which were peculiar, but it had all the excellencies that are peculiar to friendship. It was purely disinterested; and, like his benevolence, lived and moved for a blessing to its fortunate objects. The words of Seneca might have been adopted by Dr Belfrage, “Even in my studies, the greatest delight I take in what I learn, is the teaching of it to others; for there is no relish, methinks, in the possessing of any thing without a partner; nay, if wisdom itself were offered me upon condition only of keeping it to myself, I should undoubtedly refuse it.”* As a friend, he was equally steady as he was generous. Neither the tongue of scandal, nor the sting of malice, caused him to waver; yea, he was just the more excited to defend the good name of his friends, when that might be endangered through uncharitable suspicions. In short, his was, in general, a decidedly liberal spirit. Though it may be peculiarly attached to such as held similar religious sentiments with himself, he never refused the right hand of fellowship to any whose worth and piety invited his regards. His Christian sympathies were mingled with the interest of the good of every sect, and under every

* Seneca's Morals.

clime. There could be few sectarian prejudices about him whose prayers were lifted up for the prosperity of all the lovers of Jesus; who never grudged the tribute of respect due to the great in Israel, by whatsoever name they may be called, nor withheld the tear of regret over their tombs, in whatsoever land their ashes might repose. It must be acknowledged, that it required the power of Christian charity in no small degree to put his feelings and judgement under the control of such consistent generosity as to record it of Scott, that “genius and patriotism strike their harps at his tomb,”* and of the devoted diocesan of Calcutta, that “Religion and literature mourn the death of Bishop Heber in the East Indies. †

* Life of Dr Lawson.

† Extract from a private letter.

CHAPTER VII

HIS SYMPATHY WITH THE AFFLICTED, AND HIS CONSOLATORY LETTERS.

His Powers of Consolation. Rev. Mr Haddin. Letter to his Widow. Letter to Dr Waugh's widowed Daughter. Letter to the Widow of Dr Waugh. Sympathy with Ministers under affliction. Respect for the Memory of his deceased Brethren. Letter to Mrs H——. Dr Dick. Extracts from Letters on the Character of Dr Dick. Extracts from Letters of Sympathy. The Death of Infants. Letters to bereaved Parents. His Domestic Bereavements. Death of his sister Mary. Letter to a Friend. Character of Miss Mary Belfrage. Death-bed of Miss Mary Belfrage. Death of his sister Elizabeth. Letter to a Friend. The Death of a Sister peculiarly affecting. Character and Death of Miss Elizabeth Belfrage. Death of Dr John Belfrage. Account of his last Illness, by Dr Henry Belfrage.

It has been noticed in its proper place, that Dr Belfrage was a kind and faithful minister to mourners in Sion. In addition, however, to the calls made upon his sympathy by the members of his congregation, he had many personal friends in whom, and in all that befell them, whether of good or of evil, he took a deep interest. Embracing all its legitimate objects, his brotherly love disposed him to rejoice with them when they rejoiced, and to weep with them when they wept. It is not in every heart that *sympathy* can thus sustain an equal balance, whether it exercise itself on what

is joyous, or on what is grievous in the human lot. It is possible to be much more sensibly affected by the *rejoicing* than by the *weeping* of friends, so that while passion may rise to an extraordinary degree under the light of the one, it may be but feebly moved under the mournful shade of the other ; on the contrary, the tear has been seen to fall in the presence of blighted hopes and melancholy ruin, while little fellow feeling could be excited amid the smile of plenteousness and peace. In this matter, the friendship of Dr Belfrage was under the finest and most admirable control ; it did not content itself with the “ transient tear of pity, or a smile of complacency equally transient,” but sought to “ lessen cares by sympathy, and multiply pleasures by participation.”

But while the welfare of his friends was ever refreshing to him, his sympathy formed for itself a still deeper current, when it went out to afflict itself in their afflictions. A feeling of delicacy might restrain him from any intrusive notice of their private affairs, but by no such feeling was he fettered when he saw them passing under the cloud. It was, indeed, when clouds and darkness had gathered around their dwellings, that he ventured upon closer and kindlier communion with their spirits, fully prepared to cheer them with the hopes and comforts of the Gospel. In all respects he was well fitted for a comforter. His own heart overflowed with the tenderest pity, and he seemed to sorrow as if the blow had alighted upon his own head. The consolations that fell from his lips were like the dew from heaven, and gently soothed, if they did not assuage grief. While he spoke of the harmonious operations of all things for the believer's good, the ways of Providence, however dark they had become, appeared to be radiant with mercy and truth : and the duties of patience and resignation were invested with lovely and interesting importance, while he discovered the splendid rewards that must ever accompany their exercise. None knew better than he did where the best balm could be gathered, and he was not unskilful in his mode of applying it to the wound. In short, the God of Mercy made him one

of His choicest instruments to “give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

The following letters discover Dr Belfrage in the cheerless dwelling of the widow, and in them it is difficult to know which to admire most, the delicate tenderness with which he touches the wounded heart, or the nice and discriminating wisdom with which he selects and applies the remedy. In such cases it is not easy to win the heart even for a little from its own bitterness, and, by inconsiderate interference, the wound may be made to bleed more profusely. By a quick and sensitive apprehension, however, he saw the peculiar character of such afflictions, and could temper the consolation accordingly. He did not violate the sacredness of sorrow, by seeking to banish from the thought the beloved object to whom memory clung. Nor yet did he add weight to the burden by useless repinings over what could not be recovered. Still he relieved the spirit of much of its sadness by a mild and chastened echo of its lamentations, and forgot not in the meantime to breathe out a merciful promise, which, in arresting the attention, divided the exercise of the mind, and thus diverted it for a while from the musings of solitary regret.

Upon the death of the Rev. Mr Haddin of Limekilns, who had long been his friend, and who was distinguished by a life of peculiar meekness, by a mind strongly imbued with evangelical sentiments, and by labours, in season and out of season, as a minister of Christ, he addressed the following letter to the mourning widow :—

Falkirk, June 23, 1820.

“DEAR MADAM,—It is with sincere sorrow that I received yesterday the intelligence of the death of my worthy friend. I had flattered myself with the hope, that a life so valuable would be preserved for a number of years, and was promising myself the pleasure of his company for some days this summer. But He whose kingdom rules over all, has removed him from us to Heaven. While I, in common with all his friends, lament the

loss of one so mild and prudent, so humble and pious, so candid and friendly, the stroke must be felt by you with peculiar severity. But how strong is your consolation in knowing, that he has gone to the Father, and that the widows and the children of His servants, are the objects of the peculiar care of their Master. He can make His grace sufficient for you, amidst all the anxieties of your weighty charge, and cheer the house of mourning, and your lonely hours, by His gracious presence and sweet mercy.

“Your children, who have lost so excellent a father at so interesting a period, will be dear to all who knew and loved him. The memory of their father will animate them to all that is respectable in conduct; and they will find in that Saviour to whose care he committed them, a friend and a guide through life. In teaching them to tread in the steps of their father, the remembrance of his virtues will be soothing to your heart: and his people, I trust, will show to you and your children that respect, sympathy, and kindness, to which you have so strong a claim, and will cherish the memory, and follow the example, of a pastor who was to them an honour and a blessing.”

He thus wrote to another, upon whom the dreary cloud of widowhood had descended, when as yet young in years:—

Falkirk, July 16, 1829.

“MY DEAR MADAM,—Though I am not so well acquainted with you as with the other members of your venerable father’s family, I have felt a deep interest in the trials you have met with, and most sincerely sympathize with you in the grief you now feel. When I was in London, in 1825, I recollect of hearing a letter read from you, to your little boy. I was charmed with it, for it was so beautiful, and so tender; and affectionately did I join in the prayers of that evening, that your husband and children might live to bless you.

“In the heavy stroke you have now met with, the Lord hath not afflicted you willingly. At that period He threatened to take your beloved husband from you. His hand was lifted up; but in pity and compassion it was withdrawn; and now, when you are separated, you have reason to believe that God himself will be your consolation and your stay, and that a blessed reunion is

destined for you in Heaven. His softest balm is reserved for the widow's sorrows, and his tenderest care for the wants of the fatherless. Lift your eyes, in hope, to your father's Lord, and cast your burden on Him, and he will sustain you. It will give you comfort to think how Jesus singled out the widow at Nain, as the object of his compassion, and that, from his Throne in the Heavens, he still looks on her affliction, yields, in His guidance, more than a husband's counsel, and, in his tenderness, more sweet solace than ever arose from the kindest love. To his mercy and grace I wish most sincerely to commend you and your children. May He sustain you with his effectual aid, and make darkness light before you.

“ A lonely path seems to open before you, but a living Redeemer will be with you in every step you take ; and, before you, there is an eternity and a Heaven, which shall be blessed by the joy of your Lord, and by the perfect love of the Father, and the husband of your heart. I ought to apologize for writing you ; but I trust you will ascribe it to my interest in all that are related to your father, and to the mandate of mercy, which requires us to weep with them that weep.”

The interest which he continued to take in the widow of Dr Waugh, has been already noticed ; and the following letter, written to her on the death of her brother, Mr Neill, will show how ready he was to honour the memory of the dead, by kind and seasonable consolations to their beloved survivors :—

“ *Rose Park, Nov. 26, 1831.*

“ MY DEAR MRS WAUGH,—I received James' letter, intimating to me the death of the excellent Mr Neill ; and I need not say to you how much I respected him, and how affectionately I regret his departure. His mild goodness and modest worth, his friendships, so sincere and so steady, his kind heart, and open-handed bounty, his piety, so humble and uniform, and his purity of character, so beautiful, have often risen up before my mind in recollections marked by the highest esteem and veneration.

How many relatives has it pleased God to take from you to himself, within these few years ; but you have this peculiar con-

solation, that they were so eminent in all that is holy and good, and so ripe for Heaven. Your brother has been reunited, before you, to the husband and the daughter of your heart, but you will soon meet with them in the joy of your Lord. The excellent relative, whose soothing kindness you have felt so sweet under your former trials, can minister no more to the friends he loved, but God will give you a brighter light from on high, as your evening advances; and your Redeemer will fill you with everlasting consolation. Of those that do his Father's will he says, 'The same is my sister;' and what he said of Lazarus, he now says of the much valued friend you lament, 'Our friend sleepeth; thy brother shall rise again!'

"The tears of aged piety Jesus loves to wipe away; its solitude he delights to cheer; its hope he will revive; and its sad recollections he will brighten by the efficacy of his blood, and by the power of his grace. May you, my very dear and much respected friend, abundantly share his tender mercy, and may it shed over you that influence by which sinking nature is refreshed and strengthened; and, when earth becomes less interesting, may more of Heaven be made to descend on you. His hand will guide your remaining steps; and, while sweet will be the welcome you will get to Heaven, from the friends who are now with God, the grace which will crown you with everlasting kindness, will be their joy as well as yours. Here you shared in the joys and sorrows of life; but, in Heaven, your felicity shall be unmingled. Death is the last separation. Eternity shall bring none to the good. We meet in Heaven, to be for ever with the Lord.

"I am happy to say that Mrs B. has nearly regained her usual health. About two months ago, I wrote Miss W., in which I bade her mention to you how ill Mrs B. had been, and the sad disappointment with which it had pleased God to afflict us. She has been enabled to exercise a most exemplary resignation to the Divine will, and has felt the soothing and the strengthening influence of the peace that passeth all understanding. Remember me very kindly to Miss Neill, and say to her how much I sympathize with her, and how earnestly I wish that the presence and the kindest pity of the Redeemer may cheer her solitary dwelling, and fill her heart with that blessed hope which enters within the veil, and carries the heart with it to Heaven. Remember me also

to Miss Waugh, with every assurance of my kind esteem; and say to her that I will feel much obliged by her writing me how you are. I can never forget Salisbury Place; and, while any of its dear family remain in it, I wish to be remembered as a devoted friend."

Dr Belfrage was peculiarly attached to his friends in the ministry. He relished their society, not only because he was partial to those of his own profession, but because he loved their piety, could appreciate their worth, and feel himself safe in their presence. No man could be happier than he was with a brother clergyman for his guest, or when he occasionally met with his brethren, in assisting at Sacraments. Hence he took great delight in the meetings of presbytery, to which he was wont to look forward with marked pleasure; and it was noticed, on these days he was uncommonly cheerful. The Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk, cannot soon forget either his dignified, wise, and faithful conduct in Court, or the "charming pleasantries" with which, in their social meetings, he essayed to contribute to their enjoyment. But it was when they were in difficulties, or under affliction, that he was ever found, by his ministerial friends, to be a friend indeed. His best advice was ever at their service, and his sympathy was equally seasonable and soothing. He marked their increasing prosperity with generous satisfaction; was jealous of those who would, in any way, attempt to tarnish their reputation, or weaken their influence; and was justly indignant at the conduct, either of congregations or individuals, when it tended to the dishonour of the pastoral office, or sought to disturb the peace of the servants of Christ. The following extracts from letters, written to two of his friends in the ministry, upon occasions to which it is not necessary particularly to advert, will serve to illustrate what has now been advanced:—

"I have often thought of you during the winter, and have deeply regretted that the evening of your life should be darkened by such tempests. But, in the love of God, you will find sweet

solace amidst the ingratitude and the malice of men, and greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. For the sake of your interesting family, and the many friends that loved you, and, in sympathy, suffer with you, give not yourself up to despondence. The tumult will soon subside, and the deluded multitude, ashamed of their folly, will strive, by their dutiful attentions, to obliterate the unkindnesses into which they have been misled. Remember me kindly to your dear young people ; and, wishing you all that guidance, comfort, and support which your present circumstances require. I am," &c.

“ I regret very much the unpleasant circumstances in which you are placed ; but you have this consolation, that the violence will soon come to an end, and that you have done what you felt your duty. The mild and the wise throughout the land look with disgust and abhorrence on the violence of your adversaries ; and, were their cause better than it is, their insolence and malignity would disgrace, instead of promoting it. Had I met with you earlier, I would have advised you to engage in no newspaper controversy, and to reply to no pamphlet but what was written in a Christian spirit, and had the writer's name. Newspaper controversy has increased the irritation ; and, had you taken no notice of their low virulence, they would have seen that you dispirited their assaults, and would have desisted. I confess, however, it is much easier to advise thus than to act thus. My wish and prayer for you is, that the Lord may stand by you, to strengthen and to guide you ; and that, by the testimony, and the consolations of his Spirit, you may be encouraged, and abundantly blessed.”

Dr Belfrage was free from that paltry jealousy which seeks to depreciate the talents of the wise and eminent. Hence he was ever ready to do full justice to their worth, while they lived, and to their memory when they died. The circumstance of his having been the compiler of the memoirs of some of the most distinguished men in his own church, shows how dearly he cherished, and how anxious he was, to embalm their honoured names. The share which he took in drawing up the biography of Dr Waugh, in particular, will serve to

benefit his own reputation for having possessed the best elements of a generous friendship, with no mean capabilities of discerning and appreciating the virtues that exalt, and the graces that adorn, the ministerial character. The following letter was written to one of Dr Waugh's daughters, at the period of her father's death, and is, in all respects, worthy of that mind which afterward, in the work referred to, exerted itself, along with another of kindred worth, to portray in full, the character of that truly excellent man.

“ *Rose Park, Dec. 22, 1827.*

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I have been very anxious about you, for some time past, and had resolved to write you, to inquire about your welfare, and that of your dear infant, when, on the very morning of the day on which that purpose should have been executed, your brother's letter intimated to me the mournful tidings of the death of one whom I revered and loved as the kindest and best of men.

“ While my heart has been directed, in grief and sympathy, to Salisbury Place, I have much pity for you, my kind friend, for to you the trial has been aggravated by the regret, very bitter to nature, that you did not witness the last hours of your father, and heard not from his lips his last expressions of piety and kindness. But this sacrifice God required for your child. He will compensate your loss by His own consolations, and for it *the gratitude of your daughter will hereafter bless you.*

“ What a great and good man was your father! My thoughts have been dwelling on the tenderness of his heart, the ardour of his spirit, his delight to oblige, his unwearied beneficence, the unction of his prayers, his ardent zeal in the cause of the Gospel, his matchless powers in conversation and in writing, in which the serious and the useful were so happily blended with a charming pleasantry, and with a kindness which made the heart glow; the wisdom of his counsels; and the piety, beauty, and pathos of his ministrations. His admirable qualities now rise before me, while nature mourns that such a face can be seen, and that such a voice can be heard, no more.

“ At the death of such a man there is peculiar reason for

lamentation, but there are also peculiar grounds of consolation. He has entered into the joy of his Lord; and what must be the happiness allotted by his gracious Master to so good and faithful a servant? His usefulness was unimpaired to the close of life. He shone to his last hour. He has left a very bright name, and the God whom he loved and served will assuredly bless the family of his heart, for his sake. To me your father's departure must be the object of regret while I live. I loved him as my father; and I have been enlightened by his wisdom, edified by his piety, animated by his countenance, and blessed by his kindness. The character of Barnabas has struck me as a most appropriate one for your father. "He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith." I am preparing a discourse upon that text, to deliver it to my people on Sabbath. They have a high veneration for the character and labours of Dr Waugh; and they will be gratified and edified in beholding the Christian excellence of this primitive disciple exemplified so beautifully in such a master in Israel, in our own day.

"The public will expect a Memoir, or some other record of your father; and I have written to your brother J——, that if it is the wish of the family, that I should take any part in such a labour of love, they are welcome to my best services. * * * He has friends in Scotland better qualified than I am for this sacred duty, and it will give me great satisfaction if they engage in it. There is one point, in which I can yield to none, and that is, in veneration and attachment to him. None, beyond his own family, loved him as I did.

"My sisters beg to be kindly remembered to you, as entering tenderly into your sorrow. Your father will live in their affectionate remembrance. I feel very much for your mother. How bitter must the separation have been of two hearts so long and so tenderly united. Your mother has great mental energy, and I trust that she will be enabled to be the comforter of your sisters. My heart bleeds for ———. She was so devoted to her father, and her health is so delicate, that I cannot think of the effect of this shock upon her, without fear and trembling. May the Father of mercies sustain and bless her by His kindest pity.

"My heart is too full to permit me to touch upon any other

topic than the sad one that now oppresses yours. When your mind is somewhat calmed, write me how you are. I will wait for it with much anxiety. The venerable saint was one bond of our union, but our friendship, I trust, will be strengthened *by the sweet and holy power of his memory.*"

It was in this calm and holy spirit that Dr Belfrage mourned the fall of the great in Israel. He sympathized not only with the bereaved relatives and congregation, but with *Religion* herself, in the departure of her best and brightest ornaments from "the land of living men." The death of Dr Dick, for instance, made a deep and lasting impression upon him; and sincerely did he lament, along with the Church of Christ, the loss of a man, the dignity and uprightness of whose character, no less than the vigour of his intellect and the vast extent and precision of his professional and literary attainments, had raised to an eminence to which his friends and pupils looked with pride and reverence; and whose highly cultivated mind and classic taste, did much to restrain and correct that inflation and exuberance which, during the latter years of his life, threatened to overrun and degrade our English theological literature.

"I was very much afflicted," says Dr Belfrage in a letter to one of the family of Dr Dick, "by the melancholy tidings of your father's illness and death. I felt for him that high respect to which he was so amply entitled by his eminent attainments in literature and in piety, and I regarded the friendship of such a man as a privilege of no ordinary value.

"When I think how he was honoured and loved in his family, the blow is heavy indeed which has fallen on your hearts; and my prayer to God is, that he may bind you up and sustain you by his own divine consolations. The whole church mourns with you; and the wise and good of all parties feel that a great man is fallen this day in Israel."

In a letter to one of his most intimate friends, he thus alludes to the character and works of Dr Dick:—

“The Memoir of Dr Dick is well written. I was urged by some of his friends in Glasgow to write one for the Evangelical Magazine ; but while deliberating on it I found, in the last number, the ground occupied. It is so far lucky, that I had done nothing. His lectures will be a splendid memorial of his admirable skill in theology, and of his masterly style of composition, in which perspicuity, conciseness, and elegance, were so happily united. I have been reading the ‘Life of Hall,’ and such of his works as I had not before seen, with very great delight. In ardour of mind, and in the power of his genius, he rose above our lamented friend in the West ; but Dr Dick excelled him in clearness of apprehension, in the sobriety of his views, and the accuracy of his judgement, and in simplicity and beauty as a writer. You will think me, probably, too partial to our lamented Professor, but I feel that he deserves all that has been said of him. Your own reminiscences of your conversations with Mr Hall, are truly delightful. I am astonished that you could give his statements with so much exactness, and so much in his tone and spirit.”

He makes honourable mention of Dr Dick in another letter to the same esteemed and talented friend :—

“You would be gratified to see, in the last number of the Edinburgh Review, that it is renewing its strength. There were some articles with which I was highly pleased. Having read the book, I could the better judge of Macauley’s review of Horace Walpole’s Letters. It is admirably done in wit and taste, and characteristic painting. I only wished he had exposed, with more severity, the frivolous cast of many of its details, and its total want of those topics which a wise man would wish to study, and on which a good man would delight to dwell.

“What a feast may we expect from the Lectures of Dr Dick ! They will form the best system of theology which we have ; and though the part he took in the Voluntary Controversy may lead some snarling critics to charge them with deficiencies, and, by malignant comparisons, to lower them in public estimation, they will be regarded by every competent judge as a most masterly illustration and defence of the evangelical system.

Never has it been seen to more advantage as to perspicuity, acuteness, and elegance."

In the extracts which follow, will be noticed much of that warmth of heart, and delicate sense of the afflictions of his friends, which distinguished Dr Belfrage as a son of consolation :—

" Your worthy father has entered into rest, and has left us another example of piety and wisdom to follow. I was truly sorry to hear of your son's illness. Will you tell him from me, that I feel a sympathizing interest in his situation, and that I wish him much grace and comfort? The account you gave of his meek resignation, is beautiful and melting, and I trust his patience and submission are the workings of the new nature within him. May God spare to you and to the world so valuable a child, and support you and Mrs F—— amidst all the anxiety and toil through which you are now called to pass."

" I am indeed sorry to learn, that your mother is so poorly. You will find, in the grace of the Lord Jesus, a rich supply of comfort and strength in this dark season. The Redeemer knows what it is to feel for a mother's sorrows, and *He* will sympathize with you. It would have been a pleasure to your mother to continue to minister to your comfort; and who can tell but the Lord may preserve her for some time to you? At all events, the Lord liveth,—blessed be our Rock! Mention to her, that I feel much for her distress, and that I trust she will be enabled to cast all her cares upon God. He cares for you both, and with Him there is plenteous redemption, and everlasting consolation; and in life and in death, may she be upheld by that arm, on which a contrite sinner never tried to lean in vain."

" It is from no idea that I can suggest any consolation which has not occurred to a mind like yours, that I now write you; but to express my sincere condolence with you, on the death of your lamented son. In the pleasing intercourse which I have had with your family, I was struck with the kindness of his dispositions, the modesty and sweetness of his manners, and the eagerness which he felt to oblige. On various occasions I have experienced his affectionate attentions, and I feel a very deep regret for the

death of a youth so accomplished and so amiable. In the purity of his character, and in the excellence of his spirit, you have every assurance that he is happy ; and He who took such an interest in the mourner at Nain, and restored the dead young man there to his mother, will bring to you your departed son, perfect in all the qualities which delighted you, and enjoying a happiness beyond a parent's fondest wishes."

" Knowing the scenes of affliction with which you have been so much occupied, I did not trouble you with any letter. Mrs Belfrage and my sisters were indeed much affected by your sister's death, and by the added visitation in your brother's family, which has been to him sorrow upon sorrow. I trust the consolations of God are not small with you, and that, while memory and affection dwell on what you have lost, faith and hope will realize the blessedness your dear relatives now enjoy with Christ, and anticipate the reunion that awaits you. Delight in the creature is often marred by disappointment and mortality ; but delight in God rises as we advance in piety, and it will be the blessedness of eternity."

The death of infants, or very young children, deeply affected him. It was an honourable trait in his character, that he did not deem it beneath him to take notice of such events. He knew that the loss of an infant, an event of but too little interest in the eyes of mankind, was one of the heaviest of domestic afflictions, and his pity was moved to witness the passing away of infant loveliness, and the blighting of many a fond parental hope. But this was a subject which interested him from other considerations. His attention was solemnly arrested to what might be the *future condition* of such children. It will appear evident, from the letters that are to follow these remarks, that he delighted to think of their *salvation*, and offered this hope, as the best consolation of the bereaved parents. He rejoiced to meditate on the riches of that grace, which, even to the infant's soul, can convey, by imputation, the justifying righteousness of our Redeemer. On the supposition of their salvation, he saw an additional proof of the preciousness of the blood of Christ, and of the verity and

value of these cheering words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Dr Belfrage had no doubts of the salvation of the infants that died of *believing parents*, though it does not appear, from any thing he has written, that he considered the salvation of every infant as certain. This is unquestionably a subject upon which we should speak cautiously, as the word of God is silent in reference to it. Our sentiments and feelings must be controlled by the general spirit and import of the doctrines of grace, and by our impressions of the abundance of that mercy, which is in God through Jesus Christ. It is not to be disputed, that Jehovah would be perfectly justified, though he were to leave *all* who die in infancy to perish, inasmuch as *all* "are children of wrath;" but it is equally certain, that, if He wills it, He can secure the salvation of all such infants, and that without any reference to the character of their parents, by interesting them in the atoning sacrifice of their Surety.

To indulge in the hope, that the souls of such as die in infancy may immediately pass into glory, reflects no dishonour on any of the perfections of God; for the death of Jesus can glorify His *justice* and *holiness* equally in the justification of the new-born babe, as in the pardon of the sinner of a hundred years; and surely it does not detract from the exceeding riches of His grace, that its praises should be sung by infant hearts; nor should the poet be rashly blamed, who, in an amiable partiality, allowed to babes, "in the heavenly choirs," the best right to sing loudest of sovereign grace:—

"Because they found the happy shore,
They never saw nor sought before."*

To the Rev. Mr H—— of K——:—

"Falkirk, January 13, 1808.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The melancholy intelligence in your last letter, filled me with the deepest regret. In your sweet little

* Ralph Erskine's Sonnets.

daughter, I felt uncommon interest. I have often recollected the easy and graceful manner in which she used to repeat the hymns, and the wisdom and piety of her reflections, so far above what might have been expected from her years. The last time I was with you, she followed us to the gate, when I came away, indicating, by her manner, her good wishes to her father's friend. I cannot refrain from mentioning these things. To a heart of sensibility, they cannot seem trivial. They have mingled themselves with every feeling of sympathy, with which I have looked to your dwelling, and with every reflection I have made on the departure of your child.

“The consolatory topics to which you have adverted in your letter, will, I hope, in God's good time, restore tranquillity to your minds. He who in his mercy had compassion on the mother following her only son to the grave, and said to her, ‘Weep not,’ views your family, I am persuaded, with the kindest sympathy, and is saying of you, ‘I will not leave you comfortless.’ Can we think of Him taking up little children in His arms, laying His hands on them, and blessing them, and suppose that He takes pleasure in their sufferings, or that His feelings to them are stern or vindictive. In the deaths of little children, I view Him taking them away in mercy from a world, where all is vanity and vexation of spirit, to the felicity of His Father's house. You, my dear sir, need have no hesitation in applying such comforts to your heart, for to the righteous our Father in heaven hath said, ‘I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.’ Think of your child as in His arms. Think of that happy meeting you shall soon have with her, and resignation, gratitude, and hope will moderate the conflicts of nature. The idea, that our dear relatives are in the dust, makes the world seem less desirable, and the grave less frightful. ‘Them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him,’ is an assurance, which, to the wounded heart, is unspeakably precious, and by it the wildest sorrow has been calmed.

“You will accept, I trust, of this expression of my interest in your affliction. Conscious how poorly I can discharge the office of a comforter, my earnest wish and prayer to God is, that He who comforts them that are cast down, may comfort your hearts, and fill you with all joy and peace in believing.”

To the Rev. Mr F—— of A—— :

“ Falkirk, 17th February, 1812.

“ I TRUST you have had His presence, whose promise it is, ‘ I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you.’ In little children, our Redeemer took a peculiar interest, and His indulgence and love to them are recorded in His word, for the encouragement and consolation of parents, when their hearts are bleeding at their early removal. Your child, you have every reason to believe, is in the Saviour’s bosom, and there He will keep it, to present it to you, on your entrance into a happier world, perfect in innocence and beauty. With this hope Christians sorrow, and its soothing influence is a pledge of that day, when God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

When the same friend was, in a few years afterward, bereaved of another very interesting child, he received the following letter of condolence from Dr Belfrage :—

“ Falkirk, February 4, 1819.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I sincerely sympathize with you, under your present heavy affliction. Your amiable boy possessed a sobriety and good sense, very uncommon at his years ; his manners were so modest, and his temper so sweet, that he was an object of attachment to all who knew him. The seriousness of his taste, and the piety of his habits, are striking indications that he was an heir of the grace of life, and, in his long illness, it was obvious that he was a vessel of mercy preparing for glory.

“ The loss of such a son must be a severe blow to a parent’s heart ; but you, I trust, will find that there is a power in the consolations of the Gospel, which can calm the most violent sorrow. The attachment of our Lord to little children, is a most interesting part of His character ; and you have every reason to believe, that your departed son is now reposing in His bosom, and that He who delivered the young man of Nain to his mother, will one day restore him to you, in all the graces of moral perfection. What an ample reward will this be for your pious care, and what a happy fulfilment of your faith and hope !

“ The piety, wisdom, and kind affections of your young son,

form an admirable model for the imitation of children ; and in A——, where he was known, his character and death will, I trust, be eminently useful in forming them to the love of all that is serious and good.”

To his cousin, Mrs G—— of P—— :

“ *Rose Park, 30th March, 1826.*

“ MY DEAR COUSIN,—Miss Whyt’s letter to J——, which we received on Monday, afflicted us all very much. The many engaging qualities of your dear little boy, had gained all our hearts, and for his early removal, we all sincerely mourn.

“ I have often thought of the shock it must have given you, and earnestly have I prayed, that the kindest mercy of Heaven may sustain and comfort you. The Redeemer has wiped the tears from many a mother’s cheeks, and made the most blessed hopes to flourish at their children’s grave. The God from whom this trial has come, is the Father of mercies, who, in His darkest dispensations, has the spiritual welfare of his children in view. Your dear boy is safe and happy in His bosom, and He will restore him to you, shining in the beauty, and rejoicing in the blessedness, of heaven. The Lord Jesus had compassion on the sorrowing mother at Nain, and when He raised her son to life, He delivered him to his mother, that He might teach separated friends to anticipate a blessed reunion, through His power and mercy. The kingdom of heaven is, in a great measure, composed of such as die in childhood ; and, as the Saviour and the Friend of little children, our Redeemer will be honoured through eternity. It is a most solemn admonition to us all, that God will soon bring us to death, and to the house appointed for all living ; and, like David at the death of *his* child, you are saying, ‘ I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.’

“ It softens the idea of the grave, when we think, that there sleep the objects of our tenderest affections ; and we feel it as an attraction to heaven, that the friends of our hearts are rejoicing around the throne of the Lamb, and are ready to hail the moment when, by Christ’s appointment, they shall receive us into everlasting habitations. Parents, whose little children are gone, feel that they have less to connect them with this world, and more with another ; that their offspring have shown them the path of

life, and that their angels do always behold the face of their Father in heaven.

“Assure Mr G—— of my kindest sympathy, and likewise Miss W——, on whose heart also this blow has fallen. May all grace and comfort be imparted to them both. I intend being in Edinburgh in the end of April; and, if it please God, will come down and see you at P——. My sisters join me in kind condolence and regards to you, Mr G—— and Miss W——; and, with earnest wishes that God may calm your heart by His soothing pity, grant you effectual support in this time of need, and make darkness light before you, by His blessed hope, and by His tenderest care, I am, my dear cousin, yours most sincerely,

“HENRY BELFRAGE.”

Bereavements in his own happy and united family, were peculiarly painful to his affectionate heart: but, if the sigh escaped from the troubled spirit, the song of resignation and acquiescence was heard also from him in the chamber of the dead. Upon the death of his sister Mary, in May 1833, we find him thus expressing himself, in a letter to a very dear female friend:—

“My sister Mary was, on Friday evening last, relieved from her long course of suffering. She was much reduced by a severe attack of her disease (an affection of the heart), in the month of January, and though she obtained some relief, I saw her strength declining from day to day. A few days before her death, she walked to our private door, that leads to the church-yard, and looked at the little garden, and at the stones and graves of the cemetery. She remarked how beautiful the mild lustre of the evening sun made even the church-yard look, and turned her mind to the far sweeter light shed over it by our Lord’s words to Martha, ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’ During her long illness, she was uncommonly patient, and often spoke of her death in language which showed that to her the prospect of it had no terror. Habitual earnest devotion blessed her many sleepless nights, and in the Psalms especially she found a refreshing and cheering influence. For the two last days of her life, she sat up in bed, leaning upon one of her sisters, and was for the most part insen-

sible. There were intervals in which she revived a little, and in one of them she raised the hand of her sister to her lips, and kissed it, and, in broken accents, spoke of the goodness of God in the many happy days they had enjoyed together, and of the far happier eternity before them, and bore testimony, as she had often done, to her feeling and hope of the Redeemer's mercy.

"Amidst the griefs of nature, we felt that blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, and we trust that the Lord will give us grace to follow her faith, considering the end of her conversation."

For seven years had this remarkably pious lady laboured under very severe bodily affliction, which was borne throughout without one murmur. She possessed a clear and vigorous mind, and her piety was uncommon. About four years before she died, a decided change in her religious views and feelings was occasioned by her hearing her brother preach from these words in Ezekiel, 20th chapter and 37th verse, "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." She frequently confessed, that, till she heard this sermon, she had not felt religion in its life and power; and from this time her walk with God became closer, the tenderness of her conscience increased, and her holy jealousy over herself was strict and unwearied. She now spent much of her time alone, and, in passing the door of her chamber, she might be frequently heard singing penitential psalms. Still, in her intercourse with friends, she was ever cheerful, and void of improper religious ostentation. She took great interest in the success of her brother's ministrations, and often spoke in rapturous strains of her beloved Henry's appearance at the last day, with many of his people as his crown of joy and rejoicing. She felt herself deeply indebted to him for the private means of grace which she enjoyed with him, and said one day, when conversing with him upon this subject, "What delightful meditations I have had with you on our Lord's visit to the family at Bethany!" "I trust," said her brother, "that you can view Jesus as the resurrection and the

life, and answer his question to Martha, ‘Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die—Believest thou this?’” “Yes,” was her reply, “I believe; Lord, help thou mine unbelief. It was when I saw myself the chief of sinners, that I found Him the chief of Saviours.” Her Bible was her principal study, though she read a number of the best religious authors; of these, her favourites were, Marshall on Sanctification, Howe on the Redeemer’s Tears, Halyburton’s Life, &c.

Five months before she died, this meek and humble Christian was taken very ill, and, during all this time, from the nature of her complaint, she was unable to lie down in bed, in which, or in a chair, she was obliged to maintain the sitting posture. Her affliction, however, did not disturb the serene composure of her mind. She would say “Ah! what has religion done for me; unless the law of the Lord had been my delight, my soul would have perished in my affliction. All these seven years, I have never put up a petition for the removal of my trouble; I have only prayed that it may be sanctified for my spiritual improvement.” So much indeed was the law of God her delight in trouble, that when in the morning she was asked how she had been during the night, she took the Bible in her hand, and pointed to the consolatory passages, upon which she had been meditating during its silent watches. It was once remarked to her, that she might have much suffering to pass through ere she reached heaven, and this was her reply,—“Hear what God has said to me, ‘As I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will be no more wroth with you, nor rebuke you.’ With faith in that promise, I will set my face like a flint to all that the Lord shall be pleased to appoint to me. I am only vexed at your long watching. Betsy’s pale face distresses me. After I am gone, you must take a jaunt for a change of air. Always associate me with your happiest hours,—never think of me in sorrow or gloom. I trust I am going to the full enjoyment of my Saviour’s purchased blessings. Remember

always how happy we have been.” From the nearness of the manse to the church-yard, the earth rattling above the coffin, during an interment, could be heard by her in her room. This was noticed one day by one of her sisters, as a melancholy sound, and as revolting to the feelings of nature. “Ah! no,” she said, “life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. Death to me has no terror, and the grave no gloom. I can contemplate with complacency my body lying in the grave. I may be mistaken in my better hopes beyond it; yet surely, if the Lord had meant to slay me, He would not have showed me such favour.” On the last day of her life, when it was thought she was insensible, she heard her sisters’ lamentation over her, and, with some effort, said feebly, “Remember, remember how happy we have been.” She died on the 24th of May 1833. On the Sabbath after her funeral, Dr Belfrage preached from these words, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” Among his manuscripts there is a paper, written about this time, in short-hand, commencing with these words, from Jeremiah 22d chapter and 18th verse, “Oh! my sister.”

The gloom which the death of this sister had spread over the manse, was not yet dissipated, when the Lord again visited him with another bereavement. His sister Elizabeth died about seven months after this, on the 25th December 1833. He thus communicates the mournful intelligence to a friend:—

“*Falkirk, December 27, 1833.*”

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have to communicate to you the sad tidings of the death of my sister Elizabeth, which took place on Wednesday, at half-past three in the morning. About a fortnight ago, she began to feel uneasy, with pain in the stomach, loathing at her food, and great debility; but we did not apprehend any fatal result, till last Sabbath, when she was seized with vomiting of blood. This returned again and again, in spite of every medical effort to check it, till exhausted nature sunk in death.

“Amidst severe suffering, the gentleness of her spirit was still apparent. The blood and the mercy of the Redeemer were her

refuge and her hope ; and, fully aware that death was approaching, she meekly bowed her head to the stroke.

“ My sisters are exceedingly affected. To them the sweetness of her dispositions made her society most delightful ; and they feel that the Lord, in lessening their number, is taking from a home of love, those who were to it a charm and a blessing. The Lord will, I trust, fill up these blanks by His own presence and kindness, and comfort their hearts against grief on every side. I request, my dear friend, your prayers that God may sanctify these bereavements for the good of our souls, and give grace and mercy to help in the time of need.

“ I received last night a notification of the death of Mr Husband of Dunfermline, which struck me much. May his father's God be the God of his family !

“ This has been a season of great sickness and mortality in this place and neighbourhood. The Lord's voice has been crying to us in tones solemn and awful. May it awaken to serious thought, and produce an active solicitude for salvation.”

There is something peculiarly affecting in the death of a *sister*. When we follow to the grave the remains of a *father*, we mourn the loss of one to whom we are bound by numberless ties of gratitude, whose arm was constantly extended to protect or aid us, and whose affection was ever ready to devise an excuse for our waywardness or folly ; and we are dismayed at the thought, that we now, for the first time in our life, stand *alone* in the world, the prop on which we leaned with so much confidence and security having been for ever struck from beneath us. When a *brother* is removed from us by death, we feel that one of the strongest bonds that united us to the world has suddenly been rent asunder, that we have been deprived of one whose friendship was beyond the suspicion of base or sordid motive, whose counsel cheered us amid doubt and difficulty, and whose approbation rewarded our labour and lightened our toils. But when the cold grave closes over the ashes of a sister, we feel that the tyrant hath smitten us on the tenderest part. It was she who first awakened in us those better and softer sensibilities

which unite us to our kind, whose affection charmed our hours of relaxation, and whose sympathy soothed us amid weariness or disappointment, while her encouragement, and the pride and gratification she would have experienced in our success, were an unceasing excitement to aspire after excellence. These, and sentiments such as these, coupled with that protection which her feebler frame and gentler nature demanded from our ruder and more masculine constitution, form a tie between a brother and a sister which can be equalled only by conjugal or parental affection.

By a mind like Dr Belfrage's, so admirably fitted for friendship and domestic enjoyment, the death of his sister Elizabeth must have been severely felt. She had been the companion of his earliest days; the friend of his maturer years, she participated in all his schemes of benevolence, and approved and stimulated him in his many labours for promoting the best interests of humanity.

During the whole of the last night of her illness, Dr Belfrage was in deep affliction of spirit, and considerably indisposed in health. When it became evident that her hours on earth were to be few, he seldom left her pillow. He returned to Rose Park about eleven o'clock, to worship God with his own family; for with this good man no excuse could justify the omission of this religious duty. After this he went back to the Manse, and remained with his sister about an hour, when it was thought she had in some measure recovered. His mind, however, could obtain no rest; he was afraid she might die in his absence; and though very unwell, he returned again to the house of affliction, and remained till half-past three in the morning, when her "spirit returned to God who gave it." Of her many excellencies, and of the solemnities of this last scene of her life, we shall permit one to speak who was the witness of both:—

"She was naturally of a delicate constitution, and was therefore the object of our tenderest care, as well as of our fondest affection. Her gentle spirit and amiable manners made her the beloved of all classes; and an atmosphere of

peace and purity ever surrounded her. Her sweet temper had a charming influence over others; and where she was, there could be no discord. She was lively and cheerful, with a great deal of pleasantry and humour. After her sister's death, her pale cheek, and emaciated form, alarmed her friends, though she herself never complained, and never spoke of herself as being ill. In the autumn she was seized with *influenza*. This left great weakness, and her buoyancy of spirit was gone. She now slowly drooped, but still uttered no complaint, till within ten days of her death. Her reading was of a different caste from Mary's, and was more simple. She said, after her death, 'we will read those books that Mary relished, that we may imbibe more of her spirit.' She read, at this time, Payson's Memoirs, and spoke much of his deep piety. She perused also a manuscript memoir of a young lady, which was drawn up by a brother, and felt deeply interested in its contents. She would often exclaim, when reading it, 'Poor Agnes, poor Agnes!' We thought it too much for her, and wished her to lay it aside, but she would not give it up till she finished it. She often reverted to it, saying, 'Happy Agnes, she is free from all her troubles now.'

"No danger was apprehended till within two days of her death; and it was but two or three hours before her dissolution that we felt the dread messenger to be near. Her brother spent the most of that evening with her, that by his prayers and conversation she might be comforted. While he was telling her of some of her mother's pious experience, she fell into a long faint, and, on her recovery she said, 'Henry, what was it my mother said?' It was now getting late, and she wished him to go home, and take some rest. He retired into another room; and when she missed him, she said, 'Henry is not away without bidding me good night.' He again approached the bedside; and while she calmly put out her hand, she, in the most touching manner, said, 'Good night, my dear Henry.' Neither of them was aware that death was so near; but, from her extreme weak-

ness, he was afraid that the least agitation might prove fatal. Though now suffering the most excruciating agony, not a murmur escaped her; and in the intervals after long faints, she was employed in prayer and silent ejaculations, accompanied with the frequent lifting up of her hands. Observing her composure, we said, ‘Dear Betsy, are you not afraid to die?’ ‘No,’ she replied firmly, ‘my hopes rest upon my Saviour’s finished work;’ and after some other endearing expressions of love to her sisters, she cried, ‘O dear N——, lift me up,’ and, falling upon that sister’s neck, she expired.

“Where is the brother that led us to the Saviour in that trying hour, when we were struck dumb by the blow of the Almighty? As we wept over our dead, he said to us, ‘Go, and tell Jesus, there is no heart like his for compassion and tenderness; his ear is ever open to the cry of his people. He alone can bind up the broken heart, and say, peace be to the wounded spirit. O look from a dead sister to a living Redeemer, and seek comfort in religion, for out of her resources you can alone be supported. While you now stand by her corpse, dwelling upon her endearing qualities, the purity of her mind, the faultlessness of her character, and her amiable manners, bless God for these; but, O, think of her humble trust in a Saviour, and calm submission under affliction: when the call came thus sudden, she was enabled to meet it with meek resignation. I see much of the Lord’s goodness in this, and much to be thankful for; from her lively disposition, I was afraid death would come in great terror to her. Let us bless God, then, for the humble faith and meek patience of our dearest sister. O let us imitate her lovely example, and imbibe her mild and gentle spirit.’”* On the Sabbath after the interment of this sister, her afflicted brother discoursed from the 13th to the 17th verses of the 103d Psalm.

Along with these heavy bereavements, Dr Belfrage was at this same time called upon to mourn the loss of his cousin,

* At the 69th page of the second volume of Dr Belfrage’s Exposition of the Catechism, will be found some further account of the last illness of this lady.

Dr John Belfrage, minister of Slateford, who died at Rothesay (whether he had gone for the benefit of his health), upon the 16th of May 1833, about a week before the decease of Miss Mary Belfrage.

Of this relation, he has left behind him, in *manuscript*, a most interesting memoir. It is with much satisfaction that we submit to the reader the concluding part of it, in which there is a most affecting account of the deep afflictions through which Dr John passed, in the last days of his life. This admirable and talented man is fully entitled to such a mark of respect in the pages of this biography; and the circumstance of its being drawn up by Dr Henry will be sufficient to secure for it an attentive perusal.

“ Soon after this, his own health began to droop. It commenced with breathlessness, brought on by exertion, quickness and irregularity of pulse, and an uneasy feeling across the chest. ‘ I have remained,’ said he, ‘ hours in bed, without being able to sleep, from such sensations. I find it necessary to be very cautious in all my movements; to be so temperate as to taste nothing but water; and to view the world with the apathy that cares little for its smiles or its frowns. I have now served in the Gospel twenty-five years, and begin to think my best days over. I wish to render familiar to my mind, the last scene, and to be preparing for it. I neither repine, nor am I very anxious, and hope that, whatever happens, I shall not disgrace, by any unmanly or unchristian feeling, either my house, profession, or office.’

“ It was about this time also, that the health of his only son began to droop. This young man, whose talents were of the first order, and whose disposition and manners were uncommonly amiable, had just finished his education, and was about to settle in the medical line, in a sphere where his success seemed certain, when his health became delicate, and anxiety and alarm were strongly excited in his father’s heart. The efforts made, and the care which was exercised about him, were so effectual, that the unfavourable

symptoms passed away. His father judged it prudent to send him to Chatham, to spend the winter, where he might be less exposed to cold and dampness; where, under the roof of a medical friend, all care would be taken of his health and comfort; and where he might have such a measure of active practice as might tend to his improvement, and to his cheerfulness. By his father's pious care, blessed as it was of God, he had attained that knowledge of the Gospel, those impressions of things unseen and eternal, and those devout habits, which it was thought would qualify him for a life of holy and benevolent utility, but by which God intended to prepare him for a long course of suffering, to be endured with the faith and patience of the saints. He sent him away, commending him to God, and to the word of his grace, and anticipating for him a guidance and a care far beyond what the solicitations of friendship, or the pity of a father could exercise. The following extract from his first letter to him will show how wise his counsels were as a father, and how pious his solicitude for his best interests:—

“ ‘ I am happy to think that your passage was not tedious. You was not unfortunate in encountering a storm, as it would give you an idea of the sea, when violently agitated; and the temporary sickness you felt may be followed by good effects. I cannot tell you what relief it affords to my mind, that you are placed under my friend Dr M——. You will fall in with books suited to your taste; the labours of the surgery will amuse you; you will have an opportunity of seeing interesting cases; and there is so much of good sense in my friend, of accurate observation, and of truth and modesty, that you cannot fail to be both instructed and pleased. His religious character, too, cannot but command your respect; and, from the influence which his piety has in purifying his principles of action, in rendering him benevolent, upright, and faithful, and procuring him the respect and confidence of the numerous circle in which he moves, I would hope that you will be still more impressed with its real worth, and its relative utility; and that, without it, a man wants what is very essential to his well-doing in this world, and to his happiness

in the next. I hope you will remember that you are under the eye of God ; that you will be sincere and fervent in your prayers to Him, day after day, and that it will be your earnest desire that this change of scene which has been resorted to for the benefit of your health, may be conducive to your moral improvement. Be careful in guarding against cold, avoid night, and go to your bed with your feet warm ; be polite to all ; and to the family where you live, let your manner be respectful and attentive, eager to please, and ready to obey.'

“ For a while he went on happily, for he was treated as a son, and his engagements in medical practice were such as deeply to interest, but never to fatigue him, when one evening he was seized with vomiting of blood, and the darkest fears as to his life were excited. The sad tidings were sent down to his father by Dr M——, and a few lines were added to the letter, by William, to soften the intelligence ; and, while he expressed his wish to have been near him, besought him not to come, if it was thought it would be injurious to his health to attempt it, and requested him to pray for him. He was at that time so much affected by his own disease, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could ascend the stair of his own dwelling. ‘ Never can I forget,’ says a friend, much with him, ‘ the memorable day in which he received the heart-rending intelligence. After reading the letter to me, he said, I have not yet made up my mind how to act ; I will look to God for guidance ; and, though I have a wish to leave home to-night, that I may see him in life, we must not give way to our feelings ; we must endeavour to keep each other up, and to submit to the will of our heavenly father.’

“ Next morning he left Edinburgh in the mail for London ; and a more dreary journey can scarcely be conceived. There was much reason to fear that he might die by the way, or find himself unable to proceed ; or that the shock of meeting with his son in the agonies of death, might utterly overwhelm his soul ; but he went away leaning on the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof, in the time of trouble. The

words by which Jacob was encouraged in a dark and lonely journey, were spirit and life to him:—‘ Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to the land, for I will never leave thee.’

“ In a letter to a friend, he gives a very interesting account of his journey, and of the meeting with his son.

“ ‘ I stood my journey much better than I expected. I had a very quiet passenger on to Doncaster. Afterward we had two Scotsmen, who had settled in London, and we were soon yoked in conversation. I endeavoured to avoid thinking, as much as possible, and was glad to talk to divert my trains of thought. One of these Scotsmen was of service to me when we landed at the Post-office, in getting a hackney-coach to convey me to the place where I should find a coach to Chatham; he accompanied me, and saw me ready to start. We arrived in London a little past seven. I breakfasted at the inn, and set out for Chatham at eight. My journey to Chatham was a very painful one, especially as I approached the scene which was to disclose to me the reality of the case. He happened to be partially asleep when the coach stopped at the door. After some little time, Mr M—— went to his apartment, and remotely prepared him to expect me in the course of the day. Sometime after, he went again, and informed him that I was come. By-and-by I went into his bed-room, affecting as much coolness as possible. Not being allowed to speak, except in ayes and noes, we had no conversation. On coming down stairs, I was very much overwhelmed, and felt it difficult to act with any thing like manly firmness. I have been sitting beside him for some hours, have told him some news of home, and have rubbed his chest with some liniment. This has had the effect of making both his feelings and mine more comfortable. I hope my presence may soothe him, and keep his pulse easy. Should there be no increase of expectoration, and should hectic fever keep off, still there is hazard of the return of the vomiting of blood; and long-continued care will be necessary. How thankful I am that I have seen him alive, and have not all at once been left desolate and to mourn.’

“ Every thing was done for the restoration of his health that medical skill or kind affection could prompt or execute. ‘ You can scarcely conceive, he says, how much is done daily to relieve his complaints, and to give him greater freedom in breathing ; his limbs are rubbed every night with a strong liniment, and his back, breast, and sides. Two hours are spent in this way every evening. The cough is thus relieved, the expectoration is rendered more easy, and his nights more comfortable.’ Religion shed its power and its consolation and hope over the scene. Sweet to the sufferer were the promises read by a father’s voice, and the prayers which rose from a father’s heart. ‘ The courage, the composure, and pious resignation,’ says he, in a letter, ‘ which William displays, are very wonderful. One day, he said to me, ‘ you are very keen-eyed to-day, what is the matter with you, be candid, and tell me ?’ I told him, that I had noticed, that when he was asleep his eyes were partially opened, and that I looked on it as a bad sign. He replied, that he ‘ did not know that before, but that he had felt his mind somewhat *earied* of late, and felt himself dreaming when he was awake.’ He added, ‘ I have done with the world now. I was once very keen about my profession, but I never think of it now ; what a vain world is this. I am not sorry to leave it ; I am sorry to leave you,—you are my all ; but we will meet again. I have not assurance of my interest in Christ ; but my dependance is on him, my hope is in him, and I am resigned.’ On other occasions he said a great deal more to the same purpose. This is a season of severe trial. O that we could leave events to God, mind the duties of to-day, and rely on the promise, ‘ As thy day is so shall thy strength be.’

“ It was while thus watching and ministering, in affectionate solicitude, that he received accounts of the illness of his mother. She had come to spend her last days in Slateford ; and was, when he left it, though frail, still able to attend divine worship. She was meek, humble, contented, and prayerful. After he went away, her asthma became

more severe ; and after some weeks of suffering, she died before her son was able to return. He needed nothing to remind him of a relative so revered by him ; for in every act of kindness and care he performed for his son, he felt the tenderness of heart of which he had been the object, and which becomes more intense in proportion to the suffering and helplessness of those to whom it points. ‘ I am sorry,’ says he in a letter, ‘ that I cannot be with her. My health makes it impossible for me at present to undertake such a long journey ; and the situation of my poor Billy does not allow of my absence from him. Tell my mother to trust to God ; and though he should slay her, to put her trust in him. What else, or what better can she do ; she cannot trust in children, in friends or worldly wealth,—they are all evanescent. Let her, then, cleave to God, who is revealed to us in Christ, and say, this God shall be my God for ever and ever ; and should we never meet again in this world, I hope we will in another, where our comforts will not be embittered by sickness and death, nor our activities and rejoicings damped by age and infirmities.’

“ The interest which he expressed in the peace and edification of his people, and in the sickness and death which happened in some of their families, and the sympathy which he felt in the death of some of his friends in Scotland, are expressed by him in various letters, and show the powerful sense of duty and charity which habitually influenced him, amidst feelings and occupations which might have been supposed to absorb his mind, and to supersede every other. He mentions his being told, while in Chatham, of a gentleman there who had received intelligence of the death of a daughter, an only child, in India, and whose family were found, by one who called on them to condole with them, not only comforted, but cheerful. There is, he remarks, something marvellous to me in this state of feeling. My happiness is so much bound up with the life of my friends, that when any of them very dear to me are taken away, the world becomes a void to me, and my power of enjoyment for a time

is gone. What a mercy my boy is yet spared to me. If he is taken from me, I hope God will make 'his grace sufficient for me, and perfect his strength in my weakness.'

"In one of his letters from Chatham he remarks, 'It was twenty-eight years yesterday since I was settled at Slateford. In looking back, I have gone through a great deal. I can truly say, I have been interested in the welfare of my people, both spiritual and temporal; and that if I have come less boldly and prominently forward than others, it has not been from carelessness, but from a certain degree of diffidence. My labours are not likely to continue long; but as long as God enables me, I shall abide by my part, and do my best, and leaving fools to struggle and dispute about trifles in their own vulgar and offensive way, I shall be content with the humble character of a country pastor, faithfully warning the careless, and conducting the wise and good in the way everlasting. In looking back on the scenes of sickness and sorrow through which I have passed, I am disposed to say, with Jacob, "Few and evil have the days of my pilgrimage been;" and, in looking forward to the days of darkness I may yet see, my soul faints within me; but all is ordered, and well ordered,—and I hope that God, who has guided and supported me from my youth, will not forsake me when I am becoming old.'

"It will not appear surprising that his own health was materially affected by this long series of anxiety and watching. His respiration became more difficult, and his strength sunk so rapidly, that to some it seemed likely, that instead of going to the grave of his son mourning, his son should put his hand on *his* eyes. There was so little hope felt as to either, that it seemed doubtful to his medical friend which of the two should die first. He felt as if in the situation described in the forty-second Psalm, where it is said, 'Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts, all thy waves and thy billows pass over me.' This passage he had felt as most applicable to his case on the death of his wife, and now it occurred to him as still more appropriate; but he

felt that he had not now that vigorous health so necessary to give firmness to resignation, and holiness to hope. He rallied a little before the crisis of his son's death arrived; and he thus describes it, and the impression which it made on him:—

“ ‘The discharge of blood was effected by coughing; and after continuing about two hours, it stopped. It returned on Saturday. We continued to apply cold water almost incessantly to the face and hands, and succeeded in stopping it; but on Monday it came back, and as Dr M. was engaged, and Mr M. was unwell, I had to struggle with it alone. I have sat by him constantly; and when he coughs, and his face becomes flushed, I wash his face and hands with cold water. When I am alone with him, during the night, I feel painfully anxious. There is little sleep; and the least cough rouses my fears, and calls me to my duty. Through the mercy of God, I have succeeded in preventing a return of the bleeding for fifty-two hours; but the fatal issue is pressing on. During the sad struggle we endeavoured to conceal our feelings, but this was impossible; he asked me to tell him if I thought there was immediate danger, or if he might survive a week. I told him that I did not think his disease would run such a rapid course. He asked me if he died at Chatham, where I intended to bury him. I told him. Then he said, it was of no great consequence, but he would wish to be in the same ground with me, and that it would not perhaps be a very great expense to get his body conveyed in a ship to Scotland. I said I would think of it, and do what was right; and that expense would not be regarded in such a case. He said, that though he spake thus about the body, he was most deeply concerned about his soul. Upon this subject I conversed with him at great length. He lamented his want of deep conviction of the evil of sin; but declared that all his hope of acceptance with God, and of happiness through eternity, was fixed on Jesus Christ, and his redemption. After I had talked and prayed with him, he said he was quite resigned to live or to

die ; that it was a vain and sinful world we were in ; that there were only a few he was sorry to leave ; he said he would soon meet with me again.'

"Such was his fortitude, that he could contemplate symptoms of approaching mortality with a calmness of which his father could not always maintain the appearance. In a burst of grief, which all his vigour of mind could not enable him to suppress, he mildly and firmly said to him, 'O, father, that is not like you.' And this was not the affectation of a philosophic calmness, but the firmness of a trust in God which he was enabled to exercise, and which showed itself superior to all the regrets and the fears of nature.

"He asked him if he had made his will ; he told him he had, and read the scroll to him. He was quite satisfied ; and said, you are doing all the good you possibly could with the property. The only solicitude he felt was about the comfort of those he loved, when they might be solitary and helpless ; and it was soothing to him to think, that when he could not minister to them in person, what would have belonged to him might be useful to them. Of the affectionate bequest of the dying it may be said, for the living have often felt it—'A blessing is in it.'

"In the last letter he wrote before his son's death, he mentions a letter having reached him from a relative in Scotland, and that it would be the last he would ever receive. He states the deep seriousness which he continued to manifest, and which seemed to increase as the crisis approached ; how he professed his repentance for the sins of his youth ; his entire reliance on the Saviour ; that he was now done with the world, and was entirely resigned to the will of God. This is indeed a time of trial ; but 'be still,' says Jehovah, 'and know that I am God ;' be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

"It was but a short while after this that his son died ; and I cannot attempt to describe his feelings at that period, nor when the corpse of his son was taken away to be conveyed by sea to Colinton, while, from his own great debility, he

was unable to accompany it. This must be left to the tender heart to conceive. It was some weeks after ere he was able to travel to Scotland; and amidst all the courage he could muster, it was evident how strongly he felt his return to scenes which had lost their sweetest charm for the heart. It was remarked how much his mind seemed now detached from the cares and the attractions of the world; and that, while there was still more gravity in his manner and conversation, it was so far from being sullen and repulsive, that it was felt as stamping a sacredness on his sorrow, and as attracting more sympathy the less it sought it. While he deeply felt all the sad circumstances connected with his bereavement, he was alive to all the comforts which the providence and grace of God had afforded him. Gratitude is the noblest feeling, and hope the best consolation of the bleeding heart. In conversation with a friend he said, ‘We must not be ungrateful; we must not forget the pleasure we had in his society for many years; he rarely gave us pain, and we are sure that he is far happier at this moment than we could ever have made him. Though we know not now, we shall know hereafter. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.’ To another friend, who had come to condole with him, he mentioned, in a very feeling manner, that when his son had been expressing his regret that his convictions of the evil of sin were not more strong, but that he felt his need of a Saviour, had no hope in himself, but relied entirely on Christ’s merits, he repeated to him various passages of Scripture, and particularly dwelt on the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of the 54th chapter of Isaiah. His son said, that is a precious promise, indeed; I wonder it did not occur to me before. The devout and tender feeling, says my informant, with which Dr Belfrage repeated the conversation, I felt as a proof how deeply he felt the value of those means of consolation which he had so successfully imparted to the heart of his beloved child.

“The first public service he performed after his return to Scotland, was at the dispensation of the Lord’s Supper, in

August 1830. On that occasion I officiated for him, and he addressed the communicants at the second table; and it was peculiarly solemn and melting, for his voice was feeble, and his countenance pale; but there was such a pathos in what he said, that he was listened to with breathless attention, and many tears of nature were mingled with those which piety was shedding at the Saviour's feet. The train of thought he pursued showed a heart in the grave, a heart at the cross, and a heart in heaven. He dwelt upon the power and constancy of the love of Christ; its power to soothe, when the heart that cleaved to us in kindness was cold in the dust, and after going to the Father as our forerunner, shedding light, and hope, and safety, over the path, to all that followed him.

“In the beginning of the year 1832, his medical friends advised him to try some change of scene, and what a more airy situation would do; and he was conveyed to his brother's house at Kingsknowes, but, amidst all possible care and attention, he suffered extreme distress, yet, with admirable calmness declared, that his reliance was on the Saviour whom he had preached to them, and expressed his willingness to suffer whatever God was pleased to inflict.

“To a friend, sitting sorrowing beside him, he said,—‘Look up to God, and you will never want a friend, and do all the good you can.’ What a striking testimony was this to the delight he had felt in acts of charity, and to the sweet recollection with which they cheer the hearts of the good, and most affectingly do they attest the mercy with which God had visited him in all the dark scenes of his life. Tried sorely and variously as he had been, there was not an hour or a scene in which God had left him comfortless. The living God had been nearest to his heart in his most bitter separations, and his voice he heard sweetest in the house of silence. He said, I will try and write a sermon on—‘Tribulation worketh patience.’ This is by no means its natural result. Suffering, and especially continued suffering, wears out the firmness of the vigorous, and the calmness of the

mildest ; and there is nought but divine grace which can associate with it such a benignant influence. It is in the solicitude which it brightens, that hope flourishes ; it is on the sick-bed that it softens, that gratitude sings. When suffering the most, his eyes were lifted upward, and he seemed to be saying, ‘the cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it.’ After nights of sleeplessness and agony he appeared cheerful, and instead of dwelling on the severity of his suffering, would mention the alleviations he had experienced in occasional moments of ease, in the sweet thoughts of holy meditation, and in the rest of his heart in the peace of God. In him that text was strikingly realized, Colossians i. xi.

“ When he was told of the death of Dr Dick, the intelligence was communicated as cautiously as possible. A friend, who had come to see him, expressed his impression that it would be a shock to his feelings ; he paused, and then looking up with an air of tranquil solemnity, said, ‘ No ; I have for months looked on myself as a man on the brink of eternity. I do not feel the event as a separation ; I rather feel as if it had brought us nearer than before.’ ”

“ In the last visit he paid me, and it was when he was recovering from a severe attack of his malady, he took with him, from my library, a late publication, bearing the title of ‘ Farewell to Time, or Last Views of Life, and Prospects of Immortality.’ It is easy to see how, from the state of his mind, he was led to select it. He found little in it that accorded with his feelings and views, and said, ‘ the time is past when I could be charmed with the beauty of its style ; how coldly it speaks of that Saviour who is all my salvation and all my desire. I look here in vain for the exhibition of that righteousness without which I can have no hope for eternity ; and of that grace without which I cannot move one step in comfort to it ; and how unfit are its prayers to express the emotions with which my heart and my flesh would cry out for the living God.’ It has been said, that the speculations of the moralist about death and eternity are

disrelished only by the weak and the vulgar, and that they alone demand the rant and the flights of a vain enthusiasm; but Dr Belfrage, and many such as he, have felt, in sickness and sorrow, that their counsels were like songs to a heavy heart; that their offices of piety were devotion without heart; that the hope they magnified was a mere confidence in the flesh; and that this was their only solace, and all their salvation,—‘It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who sitteth at the right hand of God, and who also maketh intercession for us.’

“In the last summer of his life he went with a friend from England on a tour to the most remarkable places in the West Highlands. He was led to this, by the wish he had to enjoy the society of a much valued friend, and by the idea that it might conduce to establish his health; but the fatigue of travelling, and the keen air to which he was exposed, in climbing the hills and crossing the lakes of that district, were far from being of advantage, and he returned much more feeble than he had set out. He was much interested by what he saw. There is something in the grandeur and sublimity of nature, which accorded with the elevation of his mind and the solemnity of his feelings. In contrasting the strength of the hills with the frailty of man, and the majesty with which, from age to age, they awe the short-lived mortals that gaze on their height, or rest under their shadow, he felt like Hezekiah, ‘In the cutting off of my days I shall go to the gates of the grave, I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.’

“In the autumn his malady increased on him to a great degree; and during that season, and for the most of the winter, his struggles were severe, yet his patience never failed him, and his trust in God was never shaken. In compliance with the counsel of his much respected friend, Dr Abercrombie, he resolved to go to Rothesay as soon as the weather permitted. He stood the journey to Glasgow well; and while there, talked to his friends of the probability of his falling, as he termed it, while at Rothesay, and gave some

directions as to what he wished to be done if the worst took place, with as much calmness as if he had been speaking of taking an easy and agreeable journey. He became worse on his way to Greenock ; and it was necessary that he should be put ashore there, and remain for some days in the house of a friend. An effort was made by him to get to Rothesay ; but, after his arrival, his debility increased every day. He was able only once to take an airing in a carriage, and even then tried to amuse his affectionate and anxious attendant, pointing out the fine scenery along the coast ; and when his eye caught sight of some very fine wall-flower, he spoke with emotion of the taste and good feeling of the man, who, in the culture of such plants, gratified others as well as himself. It is in the simple beauty of nature that the Creator's hand is most clearly seen, and on it alone can the sinking eye rest. The gratitude he felt for the kind attentions paid him, was another very pleasing feature in his character as a sufferer. Too many of the sick are apt rather to speak of what ought to be done for their comfort, than of what is done ; but the least expression of sympathy he thankfully acknowledged ; and if any circumstance pained him in the ministration he received, it was the fatigue and anxiety to which his friends were subjected. He would express his gratitude to God for the respite which permitted them to sleep as well as himself ; and never neglected to solicit blessings for them when he implored mercy for himself.

“ The interest he felt in the sickness and sorrow of others, beautifully indicated the generous kindness of his heart. He had a cousin who had laboured for some time under the same malady with himself. He heard, with delight, her pious fortitude, holy peace, and meek acquiescence in the will of God ; and stated his conviction how much such devout tranquility and self-possession were adapted to soften the severity of disease to the sufferer. He was anxious to hear, from time to time, of her condition. Not long before he died, he said, M—— will be much affected when she hears that I am gone ; and so she was. She regarded it as a call

from heaven to trim her lamp ; and on the evening of the day of his funeral, she entered into rest.* How beautifully does such sympathy remind us of the feelings of the apostle John, who, endeavouring to soothe his fellow-sufferers, calls himself their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

“ ‘I never,’ said a friend who watched him with devoted and unwearied kindness, ‘saw one who had so little fear of death. He was in the parlour the night before he died ; and while suffering extremely from his breathing, we asked him if we would send for his young friend who had come with him to Rothsay, he said, “wait a little, you will do very well, let him enjoy a walk.” After he was put to bed, he said, “would you wish me to sit up beside you?” He said, “No ; it is your night for rest, make yourself as comfortable as you can.” Soon after he became much worse. I went to him, and he said, with the greatest calmness, “I am dying.” He requested them to wipe his forehead ; and asked what was the hour. His young friend asked how he felt. He said, “*do you mean mentally?*” When the reply was made—Yes : he said, “*all is well,*” and, looking up, “*all is bright.*” He requested him to read to him the 91st Psalm, the concluding part of the fifth chapter of Isaiah, and the last Hymn, and listened with intense earnestness. It is an affecting circumstance, that the passage of Isaiah now read to him, had been most consoling to his wife in her lingering illness, and that with the deepest emotion he dwelt on the lines,—

‘ He gives the conquest to the weak,
Supports the fainting heart ;
And courage in the evil hour
The heavenly aids impart.’

“ There is a peculiar sweetness in affliction and death in the words of grace, which God has blessed to those we love, when the voice which spoke to their hearts speaks to ours,

* The allusion is to Miss Mary Belfrage.

and when the light which brightened the dark vale to them, blesses our failing eyes. It was thus strengthened by aid from on high, thus kept in perfect peace, thus rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation and continuing instant in prayer, that he passed through the last scene, and had an entrance ministered to him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Saviour. His sister-in-law, and a young medical friend, were the only persons present; and they were so struck with what they beheld, that they looked on each other, and said, ‘ Could you have believed that any thing of the kind could have been so peaceful; we would not, if we could, have brought him back.’ ”

After so large a sketch, we feel it quite unnecessary to add aught by way of eulogy. The facts which have been stated, must have conveyed an impression of bright talents, devoted to the most valuable purposes,—honourable principles, manifested in a conduct upright, dignified, and generous,—piety, pure, enlightened, and lofty,—kind affections, melting in sympathy,—stedfast in friendship, and zealous in good works,—faith and patience perfected through sufferings,—and Christian character brightening to the last. I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me write, “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” The life now surveyed, is rich in the lessons of wisdom.—and may they be received with meekness; and the death now contemplated is bright with the radiance of hope,—and to the power of that hope may our whole course be a witness, in our seeking the kingdom of God and the righteousness of it, and in the earnest of heaven in our hearts.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS DEVOTIONAL HABITS.

The Spirituality of his Devotion. His frequent Meditation on Death. His Habits of Prayer. The excellence of his Prayers. His regularity in Prayer. His Manner of Sanctifying the Sabbath. Sabbath Evening in the Manse. Attention to his Servants. Anecdote of the Conversion of an Old Woman. His recognition of an overruling Providence. His remark on the Cholera. His love of Nature. Remarks of M. Necker. His Meditations on the Anniversary of his Mother's Death.

IN the piety and devotional character of Dr Belfrage, there were not a few rich and beautiful features. It is said advisedly, when we record of him, that he was eminently a man of God,—and of his life, that it was a life of faith. The remark is inapplicable to him, which has been made of other pious persons, that they have sometimes “frames and feelings which have more connexion with the body than with the mind; enjoyments and depressions, advancements and obstacles, which have more reference to peculiar opinions and imaginary excellence, than to the unchangeable nature of divine truth, or conformity to the character of divine holiness. There could be few such passages in his life; his piety rose out of the sacred principles of his belief, and his devotion cherished itself upon things unseen and eternal. It was impossible to be much in his presence, and be unconvinced that he was one who “endured as seeing God.” The

mild solemnity of his look imposed reverence, and, perhaps, the uniform seriousness of his thoughts, gave to him that gentle but impressive dignity which might have been misunderstood for a stately indifference.

His habits of devotion were coeval with his youth. Formed at the first under the watchful eye of religious parents, and upon clear and salutary perceptions of divine truth, they were ever afterward preserved by the earnest and diligent use of all the means of grace. In early life he tasted the goodness of God, and therefore held within him the inextinguishable germ of holiness. His heart was so replete with the tenderest affections, and these were so warmly exercised upon that which was amiable in humanity and sacred in religion, as to sustain, in lovely harmony, all his habits of life with the principles of "the truth as it is in Jesus." The remark of Mr Douglas, quoted above, may be true of those whose devotion is the creature of occasional impulse, and who must be artificially excited before they experience the subduing influences of their faith; but the piety of such, too nearly resembles the unnatural commotions of the fanatic, or the dream of the enthusiast. True religion, however, is entirely spiritual, and its fine and full melody may be sustained without the embrace of the crucifix, the magic of the painter, or the symphonies of the orchestra. From the wild solitudes of nature, when overhung by the craggy precipice, and far retired in the deep glen, the spirits of our martyrs were raised to loftier aspirations and brighter hopes, than could have been produced by all the pomp and circumstance of the most ceremonious church in Christendom.

Among the pious, Dr Belfrage stood pre-eminent, at once for the purity and spirituality of his resources, and for the steadiness and regularity with which he applied to them. His attainments in experimental religion were therefore great and influential, and thus there was less likelihood of his losing that glow of spirit in which the good man advances to perfection, and with which it is his desire to enter upon glory. To increase his devotional temper, he resorted,

among the ordinary means, to prayer and frequent meditation on death. The latter subject was much upon his mind. Having a presentiment that he might die suddenly, he endeavoured to “die daily.” He *felt* the tremendous importance of that solemn change, and made preparation for it a matter of deep and constant interest. The decease of a neighbour or a friend, was certain to engross his meditations ; and many have been impressed with the uncommon seriousness of his countenance when such an event was mentioned to him. He acted upon the principle, then, that a life of devotion cannot be maintained where death and its consequences are not conscientiously and constantly realized. Such, indeed, is the proper food of piety. “The Christian must live by hope,—the atmosphere of this world is not vital air to the believer ; like the diver, he must subsist by continual supplies transmitted down to him from a higher element.”*

But the grand subsistence of his piety was *prayer*. He prayed without ceasing. This was an exercise in which he above all delighted ; and his qualifications for performing it were of the first order. It was truly a privilege to hear him pouring forth his soul to God, either before the domestic altar, or within the courts of the Lord’s house. When engaged in the duty, it was evident that he had an awing conviction of the divine presence, modulated by the most affectionate confidence in the divine mercy. “The very name of Jehovah issued from his lips embalmed in the devotional fervour of his soul.”† His spirit seemed to melt into adoration when he made mention of the greatness of God, and into lively affection when he celebrated the grace by which he had been saved ; yea, it sometimes appeared as if he were “out of the body,” when, with the burning words of gratitude, he surrounded the throne from which came down to him light and truth. Prayer was his resort in every season of adversity, to implore deliverance,—or of joy, to offer thanks. Nor were his prayers selfish ; all his friends had an

* Truths of Religion.

† Dr Richardson.

interest in them, and such of them especially as might be weeping under the rod. In writing to a friend, he thus alludes to the value of prayer: "There is a precious solace in prayer for absent friends in affliction. The heart is soothed by the thought, that there is a hand which ministers to the drooping spirit with a power and tenderness by which the darkest sorrow is relieved, and that the tears of the separated are mingled before God." An ancient moralist said of himself, "I am never more in action than when I am alone in my study." This might be affirmed of the prayerful habits of Dr Belfrage. Often, when his library was intruded upon, he was found on his knees. If the secret and fervent communions of a saint with his God can in any degree enhance, by consecration, the sacred spot on which they are held, the Library at Rose Park is truly a hallowed scene. The piety of Johnson grew warmer amid the ruins of Iona; and may not the devotion of a Christian rise in the presence of objects which have long been the unconscious witnesses of a mysterious fellowship between a redeeming God and a regenerated spirit. "Far from me and from my friends, be such frigid *Christianity* as may conduct us indifferent over any ground which has been dignified" by a life of faith on the Son of God.

Dr Belfrage was careful to exemplify the duty of prayer before the members of his family. Ere he left his room in the morning, he knelt down, and in an audible voice, that his partner in life might unite with him, he poured forth his grateful acknowledgements to God for the protection vouchsafed to his family through the night, and implored his grace and presence to be with him through the day. "It is impossible," says Mrs Belfrage, in a note to the writer, "for me to describe the affectionate and truly touching manner in which this was done,—it is almost too much for me to think of it." Meditation and prayer, with the reading of the Hebrew Bible, and some judicious commentator, occupied the rest of the morning, till the hour for family worship, when the offerings of domestic piety were laid upon the

altar. This, indeed, was a duty which he never omitted; however early it might be necessary for him to leave home, it was first discharged, and the lateness of the hour on his return in the evening, was not regarded as a reason for its neglect.

When he went forth to the pulpit, or to visit any of his people, it was from the throne of grace that he arose; and when he came back, it was to fall again before it, and ask the blessing of Heaven on the exercises in which he had been engaged. When about to set out upon a journey, however short, he first called his family together, and commended them to the care of the Shepherd of Israel; and when he returned, it was indeed "to bless his household."

The first day of the week was, in the family of Dr Bel-frage, indeed a Sabbath—a day holy to the Lord. It was sanctified in the sacredness peculiar to the habits of the Scottish Presbyterian pastor. In the public ordinances of Christianity he took great delight, was always happiest when officiating in his own church, and did not regard it a favour to be relieved in ordinary circumstances from the duties of the pulpit. It was his custom, in the morning, before he rose, to go over in his mind the subjects upon which he was to discourse, that he might be satisfied of his having them fully in his memory. His ordinary time of rising was seven o'clock; and the interval between that and breakfast was devoted to secret meditation and prayer. During the whole of the morning he was absent and solemn in manner, speaking little, and evidently deeply engrossed with the important work before him. He ate very sparingly, and never tasted animal food. When the public services of the day were over, and after he had taken some refreshment for dinner, he retired again to his library, where he remained alone, occupied in reading, and noting down the events of the Sabbath, till seven o'clock. He spent the rest of the evening with his family, either in exhortation, or in perusing, along with them, some religious book. At nine o'clock the household was assembled, and family worship was per-

formed. Ere he allowed the servants to leave the room, he catechised them, and addressed them in the most affectionate terms upon those things that related to their peace ; of their moral conduct, and improvement in sacred knowledge, he was very careful. He not unfrequently related to them interesting religious anecdotes ; and when he had heard any thing fitted to be useful about the members of his congregation, he freely communicated it to them. One Sabbath evening, for instance, not long before his death, when he had been urging upon them the duty and value of prayer, he told them he had been lately visiting an old woman upon her death-bed, who had given him the following account of her own conversion : She had lived, when a child of nine years of age, with two brothers, whose business took them from home early in the morning ; she used to go for water to them in the morning, at five or six o'clock, to a spring at some distance. One morning, when passing a village which lay in her way, and in which lived an aged and infirm woman, her attention was arrested by hearing her engaged in deep and earnest prayer. She stood and listened eagerly till the prayer was finished, when new and strange feelings deeply impressed her mind. She had, as she thought, prayed often, but she was now convinced, that if this which she had heard from the solitary worshipper in the cottage was prayer, she had been hitherto in a delusion, and had, in reality, never *prayed* at all. She proceeded to the well under the deep impression, that unless she could pray like this old woman, she could neither be happy nor safe. She laid down her pitcher, and immediately engaged in the exercise, which she performed in a fervour of spirit entirely new to her, and which, from that moment, had never subsided. Every day found her more and more thoughtful, and she died in the good hope, through grace, of eternal life. This is a simple specimen of the kind and condescending manner in which he dealt with those who resided under his roof. It ought also to be mentioned here, that before the Sabbath evening closed, he went over to the old manse, in which his

sisters resided, to worship God along with them, and nourish their piety by holy and spiritual converse. The cotter's Saturday night has been immortalized in the chastest strains by our rustic Bard; that of the Sabbath evening of the Scottish pastor, the Genius of poetry need not disdain to sing: even "the heavenly muse" might wreath a laurel for her brow, by celebrating the sublime though simple worship which rises from his homely sanctuary.

The doctrine of a Divine providence superintending and controlling all the events of the human lot, was firmly believed by him; and he himself never failed to acknowledge God in all his ways, and to trace his footsteps in every circumstance of life. He was much given to mark the importance of events regarded by others as trivial. It was a striking remark which he made at the time cholera first broke out in the two towns nearest to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and before any case of the disease appeared in either of these cities: "Methinks I see Jehovah stretching forth his arm over these two cities lying in wickedness, hesitating whether he shall allow the plague to approach, and in mercy giving them space to repent." He liked to give a spiritual cast to the conversation at table, and was sure, if possible, to improve it in his grace before, or in his thanksgiving after, meat. In short, his piety was the halo of that spiritual existence which kept him apart from the distempered climate of the world; and, by its pure and genial influence, sustained in lively action the graces of the Christian.

Loving as he did the great God of Nature, nature itself, in all the variety of its grand and beautiful scenery, was ever to him a study of deep interest. Though not a scientific botanist, he loved to examine

"Each ravelled bud, fine film, and fibre-line,
Traced with nice pencil on the small design."—DARWIN.

He watched, with marked satisfaction, the "shrubs of Rose Park," and took great delight in their tasteful arrangement. Had he loved and realized Jehovah less, his interest in these

natural objects would have been comparatively indifferent. The man of mere taste may no doubt enjoy the contemplation of them, but his sympathies are grovelling compared with those of the Christian, who traces in every valley, and through every stream, the goodness and wisdom of the benevolent Creator. The one may have all that joyous feeling which can be conveyed through the medium of mere sense, but the other, by a process of spiritual reflection, has the scenery clothed to him with a mass of moral truth that gratifies the soul with the great idea of a present and presiding deity. "The happy idea of a God," says M. Necker, "at all times softens and embellishes the path of life; and by means of it we become delightfully interested in all the beauties of nature. By it, every thing animated enters, as it were, into communication with us. Yes; the rustling of the wind, the murmuring of the water, and the gentle agitation of the leaves, all excite our reflection and melt our souls, when we discover in them the works of Him whom we love, —when we can there distinguish the vestiges of His footsteps, and the traces of His intention; and, above all, when we consider that we ourselves contribute to the display of His power, and the splendour of His goodness."*

It is with peculiar satisfaction that the following Meditations are submitted to the reader, as beautifully illustrative of what has been affirmed concerning the piety and devotional habits of Dr Belfrage. It has been already noticed, that by the death of his mother he was deeply affected. These Meditations will demonstrate the strength and the godliness of his sorrow. They were composed on the evenings of the day which commemorated her decease, when he was accustomed to retire from the world, and devote some time to the remembrance of her many excellencies, and to implore from God the wisdom by which she was counselled, and the mercy by which she was made to rejoice. They are, indeed, precious gems; and though he continued to compose one annually, to the last year of his life, it is to be regretted.

* M. Necker on the Importance of Religious Opinions.

that the change in his mode of writing makes the decyphering of them, after the year 1827, very difficult, if not impossible :—

MEDITATION I.—NOVEMBER 21, 1809.

On the return of this night on which my dearest friend on earth was taken from me, I approach thy throne, O God, in meek submission to thy will. The tears of sorrow which dim the eye that looks upward to thee, are not the effusion of a grief selfish and rebellious, but of that affection to a mother which thy Son so strikingly exemplified. Lord Jesus, thou wilt look, I trust, with complaisance, on the fondness with which her memory is cherished ; and on the love with which her excellencies are contemplated. Blessed be thy name, O Lord, that though her death was sudden, we know that she was prepared for it ; though to us it was sorrow upon sorrow, to her it was a dismissal in peace ; and that though she is taken from us, she is gone to the Father. Blessed be thy name for that support which thou hast yielded us in the hour of separation, and in the dreary days and nights that have passed over us since. Thou hast not suffered the violence of sorrow to exhaust the strength of the body and the mind. Thou hast placed the aching head on thy breast. Thou hast lifted the shadows of death from the heart. Thou hast had compassion on us, and hast said unto us, weep not. Unless thy law had been my delight, my soul had perished in mine affliction. Blessed be thy name, that our dwelling has been the abode of harmony and kindness, and that my sisters seem so eager to tread in their mother's steps, and possess so much of her spirit. Blessed be God, that he has enabled me to improve the dispensation to them and to my people. Can I say I have improved it for myself? Lord, I have a feeble hope that it has had some influence in purifying my thoughts and wishes, in calming the violence of my temper, in making me less anxious about the world, in directing my meditations more frequently to death and eternity. Alas ! that its influence in these respects has been so

small. Lord grant, that in these, and all other fruits of righteousness, it may abound more and more. O that the memory of my mother may be a shield to me from all that is impure, selfish, and degrading; O that it may animate me to all that is pure and honest, just, true, lovely, and of good report. Often has memory and conscience called up before me my failures in duty to her; in the bitterness of my soul I would say, Lord, lay not these to my charge, nor suffer them to tinge with horror the recollections of veneration and love. If I have been enabled to act as the comforter and the friend of her advanced life, Oh! what a poor return was it for the unwearied kindness, the indulgent attentions, the tender love of such a mother, so devoted to me. For the sake of thy Son, O God, be pleased to accept of them; and, O! let him whisper to my heart, thou didst it unto me. I know not whether the part I have acted to the family since her departure is known to her or not, but to thee, O God, it is known, and it is such, I trust, as thou wilt approve. In thy presence, I vow, this night, that they shall be the objects of my care and affection; and that to walk with them in my mother's steps, shall be the eager and constant wish of my heart. Thou knowest, O Lord, how much her heart was set on my success in the ministry, my good behaviour, my happiness, my salvation; thou knowest the hopes of these which thy word inspired; thou knowest the tears and prayers which affectionate earnestness for these called forth. These tears have been long since wiped away; her tongue is now silent in the grave. But are not these tears, O God, in thy bottle; are not these prayers in thy book. O, let me find the fruits of these, Lord, in my being blessed indeed, and in my being kept from evil. O, that the scene which her presence and smile can enliven no more, may be cherished by thy favour; O that the services, which her approbation can animate no more, may be acceptable in thy sight; O that the discouragements, against which she can fortify me no more, may be rendered as nothing by the light of thy countenance; O that the sorrow and melancholy, which she

can soothe no more, may be dispelled by the joys of thy salvation. No more can she take my part against those who would depreciate and injure me. Be thou, O Lord, at my right hand, and I shall not be moved; hast thou not said in thy word, I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you,—as one whom his mother comforteth, even so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted: when my father and my mother have forsaken me, the Lord himself will take me up. These promises are now spread before thy throne; and I would say, remember thy word to thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope. These promises I would bind about my neck; I would keep them ever in view, as motives to tranquil submission and holy confidence, and unremitting exertion in thy cause; and to the Father of the fatherless, to the God of the spirits of the just made perfect, to Him with whom is the consolation on earth and the happiness of heaven, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

MEDITATION II.—NOVEMBER 21, 1810.

On the second return of that night on which my lamented mother finished her course, and entered into rest, I would worship at thy footstool, in that tender recollection of departed worth and affection, which thou, O Lord, wilt not despise. The regrets of nature are, through thy wise ordination, become less bitter and severe; but the impressions of her excellencies will, I trust, be always vivid; O, that, by means of these, I may be formed to her lively devotion and active virtues; her deep humility and mild contentment; to that spirit of peace which was the consolation of her life, and which, through the darkness of sorrow, I saw shedding peace and glory on its close. In the past year, several of her religious acquaintances have followed her into eternity. Often have my feet stood at the grave's mouth. Instead of wandering on the mountains of vanity, let my heart be opened to a solemn attention to the voice that tells me, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return;" and from the pride of life bring me to say to corruption, thou art my

Father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and sister. This year has been marked by the continuance of entire harmony in our dwelling. O that, while we live in the kind affections of nature, we ever may grow in the charities of religion. It has been marked by some utility and comfort in my labours. Lord, let my duty ever be my pleasure ; and to the people of my charge and my affection, make me the administrator of righteousness, the savour of life unto life. This year, too, thou hast led us into a comfortable settlement of that property, which, after being long almost entirely locked up from us, promises to yield a plenteous increase. Let me be guided to do ample justice with it to my father's family, and to manifest such generous liberality to them as the spirit of the Gospel requires, and as will be a tribute of honour to the memory of my parents. Oft has it been my regret, that of the fruits of the increase they were not permitted to share, but they have a far nobler inheritance ; and they shall be made happy with it whose welfare was dearer to them than their own. With this substance, O Lord, I will honour thee ; suffer not the spirit of avarice, of luxury, or vain glory, to influence my mind ; but let the spirit of charity lead me to abound in alms ; let the spirit of glory lift my affections to things above ; Lord, with all the riches of the world, we would be poor without thee,—with all its pleasures, without thee, I would be wretched. This year, too, thou hast laid thy hand upon me, in afflicting my body when far from home ; thanks to God it was so short in its course, and that my return was delayed for so short a period, and that I was not one Sabbath without speaking the word of eternal life in public ; and that the langour, and pain, and weakness my illness left on me, was cheered by sympathy, general and affectionate, and by some tokens of thy fatherly pity.* Let returning health be followed by renewed diligence. Let me pass the time of my sojourning here in fear ; and whether I shall die of lingering disease, like one of my

* He had been taken suddenly ill at Aberdeen, whither he had gone on a jaunt with a neighbouring brother in the ministry.

parents, or suddenly, like the other, let my latter end be peace like theirs. The thought is terrific ! I will not admit that the ties of nature were the only bonds that united us to them, we trust we are still one by those ties of grace which the force of death cannot break, nor the power of the grave consume, which will be recognized at the resurrection of the dust, as well as when the spirit is received into glory ; let not this hope make us ashamed. Lord, lead me in the way everlasting, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

MEDITATION III.—NOVEMBER 21, 1811.

On the third return of that night when the death of my mother filled this dwelling with sorrow, I would approach thee as the God of the departed as well as the living ; while the heart melts at the recollection of her pallid countenance, her fatal slumber, my faith would contemplate her as forming one of the blessed assembly who have come out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. I would rejoice in the hope, that the Redeemer will beautify that face with salvation, and place on that head the crown of life. When I think on the delight she took in the great things of thy law, I resolve that I will study it more earnestly, and venerate it more highly than ever. Deeply, O Lord, would I lament that I have done so little in cultivating my mother's spirit. Every book that I open, which she was accustomed to read, every ordinance which I attend, or she was accustomed to observe, reproaches me for the coldness of my heart, the carnality of my mind. O Spirit of grace, make me what pious relations have been ; and let the humble faith that dwelt in my mother, dwell in me also. O let me be awake fully and constantly to those motives to piety, to active goodness, to all the graces of the Christian temper, to all the circumspection of a duteous life, presented to me in the title,—what my son,—what the son of my womb,—what the son of my vows,—what the son of my prayers. Around us, at this moment, the angel of destruction is moving, and

laying the hopes of many families low.* The voice reaches our ears, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not. Ah, vain world, when the cheek of youth is wet with the tears of filial sorrow, and when age laments that the blossoms of its family have gone up as the dust. From such a world, devote my heart to the living Redeemer, and to the pure delights of his Father's house. I would thank thee for the health, comfort, and love, that have smiled on our dwelling; and that I have found so much of a mother's care and love in my sisters. May the God before whom my Father did walk bless them, and bless me, even me also, O my Father. O let me feel more and more the contentment of the Shunamite, and be sensible that I have her reasons to be satisfied and happy. I dwell among mine own people; I have enough in the abode, where love has ever smiled, and in a society to whom I may justly apply the language,—mine own and my father's friends. Give me, O Lord, cheerfulness of mind, ardour in the culture of the understanding, and resolution in keeping the heart bent on success in my duty; continue to me comfort in the relative capacities I sustain, and meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, for my Redeemer's sake. Amen.

MEDITATION IV.—NOVEMBER 21, 1812.

On the fourth return of that night in which my mother left us to go to Heaven, my heart places itself by her grave, and raises to heaven the cry for mercy. This night of sorrow let me never forget; let religion, with its workings, sanctify the feelings of nature, and let a Father's voice say unto me, live; let meditation on my mother's excellencies render me more active than ever in the imitation of them; let the review of the closing scene of her life excite me to prepare for a departure that may be as sudden as hers. O, my Saviour, I have been, within these few days, employed in the public commemoration of thy sufferings and dying love, in directing my people to thy exercise in thy last

* Alluding to some epidemic.

struggle. Pious parents who are gone, behold in the midst of the throne the Lamb, as it had been slain, while we have been partaking of the symbols of thy body and blood. O may I never think of them without feeling as they did, the constraints of a Saviour's dying love, or go where they went, but in the same spirit of pure and active virtue. This morning an eminently pious man, distantly related to us, and whose sympathy was most consolatory, while in the house of our bereavement, has left the world for glory. I thank thee, O Lord, that I was permitted to witness such a triumph of faith as his last days exhibited; that I saw in him the power of religion to brighten all that is gloomy in affliction, and to conquer all that is terrible in death.* O Lord, prepare me for such an exit of peace. O let me not, by indolence, by vain glory, by regarding iniquity in my heart, by living to myself, prepare for myself a death of horrors in the dwelling where my parents died in the Lord. Instances of sudden death thou seest to be necessary for us; O that our loins may be girt and our lamps burning. An instance of mortality more hasty in its progress than that of my mother's has occurred in a family in the neighbourhood. In one moment the tabernacle was thrown down, and we were called to mark, how, in an hour when we think not, the Son of man may come. The admonition given me by my mother's death, thou hast enforced by another and another instance of sudden mortality at our very door. Alas, I have been thoughtless of eternity; I have been presuming on length of days, and in mercy thou warnest me of my folly, and callest on me to be ready. O prepare me for this messenger, whose feet may be standing at the door of my dwelling; who may come this night to my pillow, to change my countenance, and to send me away. Last year a melancholy impression prevailed on my mind, that it was to be my last year. In mercy thou hast spared me; O let me not, when God is adding year to year, add sin to sin. The cough that threatened to waste my strength and shorten my days, thou

* Alluding to Mr Roberts, a distant relation.

hast fully removed, and I witness this solemn period in firmer health than for some years past. It is of thy mercy that I am not consumed. O that more vigorous health and cheerful spirits may be attended by more activity and ardour in thy service than before. The Christian world around me is flaming with zeal for the diffusion of the word of Christ. This night, while I lament that the godly have ceased, I would rejoice that the Redeemer is conquering; and that though eminent saints have closed their course, and are at rest, that the pleasure of the Lord is prospering in Christ's hand. Blessed be God, that harmony, contentment, and sobriety, still abide in our dwelling as before, and that peace and prosperity reign in the congregation. This harvest we have enlarged our psalmody; we have sung the song of the Lamb, which, I trust, my mother is now singing in heaven. The feeble opposition of prejudices and folly is dying away. O may all opposition to what is wise and good be equally short lived.* This year, O God, thou hast marked by dreadful ravages of war, battles more bloody and desolations more hideous than before. Alas! almost the whole of my public life has been spent while my country was at war. O let me preach the Gospel of peace amidst its blessings. O let my heart be constantly alive to my mother's fervent devotion, habitual piety, unwearied labour, affectionate sympathy, and domestic love. She has left us; and let me live and die in the faith, that of all that the Father hath given Christ, he shall lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day. Amen.

MEDITATION V.—NOVEMBER 21, 1813.

On the fifth return of that solemn night, in which our happy dwelling was filled with lamentation, mourning, and woe, I lift my heart to thee the Father of mercies, and God of comfort. Thou didst tear, but hast raised up; thou didst

* He here alludes to the introduction of the Scriptural Translations or Paraphrases into the devotional part of public worship, a measure which, at the first, met with considerable opposition, both from Established and Seceding congregations.

smite, but hast bound us up ; thou hast, by the soothing influence of thy paternal sympathy, and by the sweet hope which the Gospel inspires, changed the storm into a calm, and turned the shadows of death into the morning. Oh ! let the image of my mother, fervent in devotion, and shining in every domestic virtue, be ever before our eyes. It is the evening of thy day, and I have been employed in pointing out the practical influence of Christ's mediation, and describing the solemn account which would be demanded, at the judgment-seat, from my people and me. Lord ! forbid that I should then be stamped as a slothful and wicked servant. Oh ! that I may then be found to have been a good steward of the manifold grace of God ; and may the parents who rejoiced in the acceptance I met with from men, have reason to rejoice in the approbation expressed of me by my great Judge. Thou hast lately removed the aged minister in our neighbourhood, who came to this place the same year with my Father.* Thou didst call me to soothe him, with the ministrations of religious sympathy, in his days of indisposition, and to witness his last struggles. The lamp, which long emitted a dim and quivering light, is now extinguished. Thou didst permit him, in a great measure, to outlive his usefulness ; but my father's sun almost went down at noon. Even so, O Father ! for so it seemeth good in thy sight. Oh ! let me not, like my aged neighbour, be left without a relation to watch by my sick-bed,—to receive my last sigh. I shudder at the thought of a grave, which no tears of nature shall bedew, and a death which no voice of love shall soothe. Yes, O my God ! even thus could I fall asleep, if called to rest by the care and mercy of my Redeemer. I have been called to officiate for a sick neighbour, whom death is threatening to cut off in the first stages of his ministry.† Blessed be God ! that I have now ministered for

* Alluding to the Rev. Mr Hunter, who belonged to a small sect of Seceders, associated because of some peculiar mode of touching the elements before the administration of the Lord's Supper.

† The Rev. Mr Paterson of Airth.

twenty years, and not one Sabbath have I passed in silence, through bodily indisposition. Prepare me for the days of darkness,—preserve, O Lord ! the wise and the good. Thou hast been pleased to call away into the other world, one in the congregation, who was very active in my settlement in Falkirk. Many of my early friends are now in the dust. Blessed be God ! I have never wanted friends, and that others have been raised up to provide for my comfort, and that I see a congregation flourishing more and more under my care. To them, O Lord ! may I be a spiritual father. Oh ! make me the honoured instrument of saving their souls from death, of feeding them with knowledge and with understanding. This year, I have been honoured to establish a Charity and Sabbath School in this place, which are producing the happiest effects on many of the young. Oh ! bless these institutions more and more, for forming the little children of them to knowledge, virtue, and happiness; and may this Catechism, the Addresses and Prayers that I am printing for their use, contribute to the religious and moral improvement of many. At thy feet, thou Friend of little children, I lay these humble efforts,—in thy approbation I shall have my best reward. Oh ! that I may be honoured to sow the seed, from which trees of righteousness shall bud and flourish, when I am withered. This year thou hast opened the gate for the admission of Christianity into Judea. Oh ! that wise and faithful missionaries may be sent to reap the fields that are white for harvest, and may the pure and benevolent Gospel of thy Son, trample down the idols, which are thus drunk with blood. This year, too, thou hast wonderfully humbled the oppressor of Europe, and, by repeated defeats, hast made the troops the scorn of Europe, that were before its terror. Let Peace approach, with blessings in her train,—Peace not to be known by restless ambition. Thou hast given us this season a harvest particularly abundant ; the labourer has now employment, and plenty now gladdens his dwelling. Blessed be God for the comforts we enjoy ! Let me, and my brother and sisters, have an inheritance among them

that are sanctified. Oh ! let us live in the harmony, in the faith, in the virtue, in the contentment, which our parents would have delighted to witness, and which will honour their memories, and glorify thee. Amen.

MEDITATION VI.—NOVEMBER 21, 1814.

ON the sixth return of that solemn night in which my excellent mother died in the Lord, I bow myself in humble adoration of the God before whom my parents did walk, and to whom, in the worship of the spirit of the past, they now lift up their souls. O may the meltings of nature be consecrated by the spirit of religion ; and, when I think what I have in the dust, and what I have in heaven, let my heart be reconciled to an abode in the grave, when thou wilt consign me to it ; and let my soul set its affections on things above. This year I have finished, through Divine help, and published, my Sacramental Addresses and Meditations. Blessed be the Lord who guided me, and supported me in that labour, and who has given such a measure of public acceptance to it. O how my mother would have delighted in such a publication, but her glowing devotion contemplates the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as it had been slain. Let my faith anticipate the views of glory, and let my heart glow with a religious affection, increasing in assimilation to hers. It would have gratified me above all earthly things, to have put this book into her hands ; but, O my Saviour, I will lay it at thy feet. O may it minister in the improvement of thy followers, and diffuse the glories of thy name. This year thou hast laid low that system of despotic reign which has for so many years been the misery of France, and the terror of the world. Not for centuries have the nations seen a more memorable year. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished. Grateful Europe is blessing the energies of Britain, which, through unparalleled struggles, hath led the nations to victory, to liberty, and to peace. My mother's last days were the days of our country's fears and perils. Blessed be God the land, the place of her se-

pulchre, has quickened a dispersed world, and is hailed by the nations as the umpire of religion, the nurse of freedom, and the land of the brave. This year some intimate friends of our family have been gathered to the grave. We have joined with children in weeping over the graves of mothers snatched from them, while some of them were but in the period of infancy. Ah! they have yet to learn the magnitude of their loss, and to know that the stroke that lays a mother in the dust of death, is of all others, the most to be deplored. Comfort them, O Lord, as thou hast comforted us. In no heart but in thine shall we find the tenderness of a mother's affection. When we think on what is cold in the grave, we will rejoice in everlasting mercy above. This day I have seen a neighbouring minister sinking fast into the grave, supported in solitude and weakness by religious comfort, and showing, in his distress, a spirit more affectionate, and a piety more generous and ardent, than he was supposed to possess. O Lord spare him, that he may recover strength; receive him to glory, by a death tranquil and joyous, if he must now die. Thou hast given me twenty years in the ministry, while he has not had the fourth of it. O that no period of my course may be found to have been useless. O that I may finish it with joy. Fit me for whatever labours and suffering are yet before me. Blessed be God for the continuance of harmony and contentment in our dwelling, and peace and prosperity in the congregation. May my dear relatives be found in Christ. May the people of my charge, and of my heart, be wise, holy, and happy, and may I minister in the spirit of my beloved Master's labour; act with my father's zeal and purity; and die in my mother's love and peace, for Christ's sake. Amen.

MEDITATION VII.—NOVEMBER 21. 1815.

ON the seventh return of that night in which thou didst call my mother to thyself, I would pour out before thee, the meditations suggested by the recalling of that solemn scene. Ah! let not this exercise become an empty form; but, while

the heart deeply feels the veneration and gratitude so justly due to worth and affection like hers, may the spirit of grace and supplication lead me to such wishes and petitions as will strengthen pious feelings, and expand my views of the Divine excellence and love. I bless thee, O Lord, for the mercies of this past year; they have been many indeed. O awaken and maintain in my heart a corresponding gratitude. Blessed be God for the indulgent reception which my book has met with. O may a consciousness of its imperfections, and gratitude to God, suppress every tendency to vain glory in my heart. O may it find acceptance with thee. Be pleased to make it useful for exciting the devotions, and animating and directing the obedience of thy people. Thou hast diminished my income this year. I regret it may diminish my ability for doing good. Guard me from withholding from pious and charitable purposes, more than there is meet; and, I would say with Jacob, I have enough. O bless me with that portion which cannot decay, and which can enrich and bless the soul with increasing influence. This year thou hast called me to attend the funeral of two other ministers in our Presbytery, one of whom was taken away in the early years of his ministry; the other in a good old age.* O may the solemn impression with which I saw them laid in the grave, and the dust covering them, never be effaced from my mind. May I often meditate on the humility, the gravity, the modest manners, and studious habits of the first; and on the heavenly-mindedness, the integrity, the bold adherence to duty, and the ardent zeal for holiness, which distinguished the latter; and may such thoughts minister to my improvement. O prepare me for the close of my life and ministry; and, when I shall go to my long home, let it be with a heart willing to depart, with a character unstained by folly or vice, and amid the regrets of undiminished affection in the people of my charge. May I preach in the pulpit, and study in the closet, with an eye to eternity. This year thou hast suffered the

* The Rev. Mr Paterson of Airth, and the Rev. Mr Fletcher, of Bridge of Teith.

flame of war to be again rekindled, and the usurper to return to the throne of France. Blessed be the Lord of Hosts, that in one decisive battle, his power was crushed, and military renown, in which he trusted, was blasted by British skill and heroism. O that, while victory records the achievements of that wonderful day, it may tell to generations to come, how Britain laid the eagles of her proudest and deadliest foe, and her own laurels, at thy feet. May the family restored to the throne of their ancestors, be disposed to rule with justice and mercy. O let not despotic and superstitious principles, revengeful feelings, or habits of turbulence and rapine, prolong the misery of that people, or disturb the tranquility of other states. Give to rulers and subjects the spirit of wisdom, order, and peace. O that peace and truth may be in my days. Lord enable me for the future to do more for thy glory than ever I have yet done; and that, in the pulpit, I may be kept by thee in perfect recollection of self-possession, and that I may manifest the zeal that becomes an ambassador of Christ, and an earnestness worthy a friend of souls; and may my intercourse with my people be more and more improving to them. In domestic life, may our harmony and Christian fellowship continue unimpaired; and may my studies tend to promote the satisfaction of my heart, and my capacity for usefulness. Keep me from unprofitable reading, and vain thoughts. O fill me with grace and truth; and may the end of my conversation be like that of my dear parents; and all that I ask is for Christ's sake. Amen.

MEDITATION VIII.—NOVEMBER 21, 1816.

ON the eighth return of that night in which thou didst call my mother home, I would approach thy throne in the exercise of solemn meditation and earnest prayer. O render the reflections of this night animating to every pious feeling, and destructive to the slavish fear of death. Blessed be God for another year of health in my body, comfort in my heart, prosperity in my congregation, and peace in my dwelling. To the God of my mercies will I raise the song of gratitude.

with the voice of sorrow. In this year thou didst send sore sickness on my dear sister Elizabeth. Thou broughtst her to the brink of the grave. Blessed be that God who heard the voice of our weeping, and brought her back from the gates of death. O let not the solemn impressions of that scene be ever forgotten ; and, O ! blessed be God, he has not made us to mourn over another breach in our dwelling ; and though he threatened to strike, he stayed his hand. Thou hast removed last year a long and intimate friend of our family, a man eminent for usefulness and piety, one who was the companion of my father and my own ; thou hast removed him in the same sudden manner as my mother, in the same evening of the week, at the same hour, and when he had just finished the devotional exercise in which my mother was engaged when the hand of death touched her.* O may I see in this removal additional proof of the Almighty's complacency in praying persons ; may I learn from it to prepare for a removal as sudden, and to me may it be as safe and as happy as to them. O save me from meeting with death in the scene of folly, or with a heart carnal or presumptuous. O animate me to the same holy zeal, the same eager devotion, the same superiority to the world, the same purity of thought and affection, the same readiness for the Saviour's coming, the same labours of mercy and love. This year thou hast tried the land by a grievous stagnation of trade for twelve months past ; we have enjoyed but little of the influence of the sun ; our days have been days of gloominess, and the rain has fallen with a frequency and a violence seldom known before. The crop is scanty ; and much of what is got in is in a sorry condition ; and in the remote parts of the country there is much yet to be reaped ; on this account many families are pining with hunger and misery ; hearts are failing them for fear. Thou hast permitted a spirit of turbulence and daring violence to awaken, and to spread over the land, and to threaten the country with all the horrors of rebellion. O Lord, arise and have mercy upon us ;

* The Rev. Mr. Gilfillan, of Dunblane.

revive our decayed commerce ; scatter plenty from thy store. Enable our rulers, by a prudent retrenchment, and seasonable reformation of abuses, to seek the welfare and peace of the land ; and oh ! let not the people be infuriated by the vile abettor of disaffection, but let them, by frugality, and contentment, and order, and patience, bear the indignation of the Lord, and prepare for the comfort of better days, which, we trust, are at hand. I have this year, in thy great mercy, prepared for the press a volume of sermons for the benefit of the young, and I would earnestly plead, that they may be accepted of Him, who hath given it to us in charge to feed his lambs ; and that he may bless them for promoting the best habits, and imparting the best enjoyments to the young. Thou hast called me to undertake the office of clerk to the Presbytery, in place of my father, who is gone. Enable me to discharge its duties with patience and diligence. Oh ! form me more and more to self-command, to holy thoughts, to lowliness of mind, to dependance on Christ, to active goodness, to my mother's worth, and to my mother's enjoyments. Oh ! that like her I may be found in Christ, in the hour of death, live to him on earth, and reign with him in heaven. Amen.

MEDITATION IX.—NOVEMBER 21, 1817.

On the ninth return of that night, in which I first began to mourn for a mother, I would approach the throne of grace, not with the feelings of rebellion, nor the language of repining, but to express my gratitude to Him, who heals where he has torn, and binds where he smites. In thy goodness I have found the best materials for consolation, and in thy word the sweetest ground of hope. What thanks do I not owe thee, for another year of health, credit, harmony, and comfort : these have been the mercies of every year, and have been continued to one most unworthy of them. Oh ! teach me, while I contemplate my mother's excellencies, to abhor myself, and, while my heart weeps at her tomb, to repent in dust and in ashes. In thy good providence, my Dis-

courses to the Young have been published this year, and have met with a reception far beyond what I ever expected, both as to circulation and esteem. Oh ! bless them to every reader, and bless them to the youthful soul. Oh ! let me never be unmindful of the duties I have urged on others. Let me never slight the warning which I have addressed to others, or be found destitute of those principles which I have recommended to them, as the essentials of felicity. Let not any of my labours be lost to myself. Quench in me the desire of vain glory ; and, in all my labours, let thy glory, and utility to mankind, be my great object, and not popular applause, or worldly advantage. This year, too, our church has been rebuilt, and finished in a manner commodious and elegant ; and, blessed be God, it has been completed without the smallest injury to any individual, and that, though considerably enlarged, it is well filled. Blessed be God, that, during the time we worshipped without, we had so many good days in an unfavourable season ; that the rains, which sometimes descended on us, were so moderate, that none were injured in their health by the weather ; and that it was often felt by not a few, it is good for us to be here. Blessed be the Lord, we are, on Sabbath next, to observe the Lord's Supper in it,—that feast of dedication. My God ! fill it with glory, and render this first sacrament a token for good, and a pledge of Heaven ! This is the third time I have seen it altered and enlarged, and it is probably the last ; and when it is again touched, I shall be dust. Oh ! may I serve thee in it with my spirit in the Gospel of thy Son ; and, when I leave its pulpit (erected for me as an expression of respect), to be occupied by another, may it be with full proof of my ministry, and with the joyful hope of the Gospel. Thou hast this year tried our land by a late and cold spring, and a wet, bleak summer, so that the harvest has been late. We have had excellent weather all September and October ; yet, from the rains in November, much of the crop is still in the field, and passing into rottenness. The bleak districts of our land are mourning over another year of calamity. Oh !

return to us, Lord, in mercy, in weather more favourable, and in seasons more propitious. The nation is at present mourning bitterly over the death of the daughter of our prince, who, with her infant child, is snatched from the bosom of earthly felicity, and from the hopes and affections of the country, and hurried to an untimely grave. Oh ! let not the nation satisfy itself by the trappings of sorrow, but bless this sad calamity, for turning many to righteousness ; and when we see death coming up into our windows, and entering into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets, may preparation be the universal study, and eternal life the universal pursuit. Oh ! may this afflicting event teach the gay heart of youth to be serious, humble the lofty spirit of greatness, and teach resignation and contentment to the poor. Thou hast this year removed from the congregation two heads of families, my own and my father's friends. Lover and friend, thou hast put far from me, and mine acquaintances, into darkness. Oh ! raise up others, whose countenance may be useful, and whose society, when I must unbend from study, may be agreeable. Oh ! teach me to converse much with the spirit of the just made perfect, and ever to keep in view my father's meek contentment, superior wisdom, and unblemished purity ; and my mother's ardent piety, kind affections, and domestic virtues, as objects of careful imitation, and affectionate esteem. Oh ! incline me to the homage due to a father's God, and to the temper and conduct that becomes the son of thine handmaid. Amen.

MEDITATION X.—NOVEMBER 21, 1818.

On the tenth return of that night on which my mother was translated to glory, and which I would again consecrate to meditation and prayer, I bow before thee the God of salvation. While I call to remembrance the feelings with which we cried, as she was departing, My mother ! my mother ! the guide of our dwelling, and the comfort thereof,—may I never forget the voice which assured us of the favour

of Heaven to those who follow the steps of the good, and that blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. This year, a second edition of my Discourses has been published, and, for this further proof of the acceptance and success of that work, I would give thee thanks. The Catechism, which in a few days is to be published, I would devote to thy cause, and beseech thee to bless it, for promoting the knowledge, the belief, the practice of religion in all its branches. May it be especially useful to the people of my charge, and may I have the high delight of seeing them filled with the knowledge of thy will, and walking in thy fear. Thou hast given us this spring, summer, and harvest, a season uncommonly favourable. We have had more genial warmth, and a more plenteous increase, than for some seasons past; and even now the clearness of the sky, and the greenness of the fields, resemble more the brightness and the verdure of spring, than the usual gloom and sterility of November. The bushes are opening in gardens, and the broom flowering in the fields; the birds are building their nests, and the ploughman is drawing his furrows. May I behold thee, in thus turning from thy fierce anger, and delighting to make thy creatures happy; and may I see in it thy power to brighten the gloomiest season of life, and to beautify its most desolate scenes. Yesterday, the intelligence reached us of the Queen's death, whose lingering illness is at last closed. May the example which she set, of a strict regard to all that is decent and virtuous, and which had so important an influence on public morals, be copied by all in high places; and may this second display, so soon given after the first, of the power of death over those who fill the loftiest situations in society, impress us deeply with the thought, that we, too, can find no refuge from the great destroyer. Let the nation listen to the voice that addresses them from the sepulchre of our kings, and which cries, that all flesh is grass, and all the goodness of man is but as the flower of the field. This year thou didst visit my sister Mary with severe and lingering sickness, during which we several times despaired of her recovery; but thou didst

redeem her life from destruction, and hast turned our fears and anxieties into gratitude and peace. We have seen death retiring, when the victim seemed prepared for him. I would devoutly acknowledge thee as the God that kills and makes alive, who brings down to the grave, and brings up. May this night be followed by a more powerful influence than any of the former. Oh ! save me from a useless life, and from a death for which I am unprepared. What is corrupt in my affections, do thou sanctify ; what is faulty in my views, do thou correct ; and what is wrong in my conduct, enable me to abandon for ever. With such patterns of excellence before me, let me not rest contented with inferior attainments in wisdom and goodness ; but may I, like them, press on unto perfection, and live and die a suppliant for thy grace, and a monument of thy mercy, for Christ's sake. Amen.

MEDITATION XI.—NOVEMBER 21, 1819.

On the eleventh return of that night of my mother's death, it becomes me to bless thy patience and goodness, in permitting me to remain till this day. No assurance have I, that I shall attain to the days of the years of the life of my father and my mother, in their pilgrimage ; and, instead of flattering myself that I shall see a period of life more advanced than theirs, may I act as if I felt that I was now ready to be offered, and that the time of my departure was at hand. Two of my cousins have, within these few days, been called away to the eternal world ; I assisted in laying one in his grave, and soon must I perform the sad office to the other. Oh ! that I may feel, in all its humbling and solemnizing influence, this thought, that I shall soon lie down like them in the dust, and that the worm shall cover me. I have been urging my people this day to an immediate attention to the things that belong to their peace. Let me not be regardless of these things myself ; but oh ! endow me with the graces of religion, animate me to every exertion of practical utility, and pour down upon me the Spirit of glory. Blessed be God for the continued comfort which I

have in my friends and flock ; be pleased to enable me to act the part of a father to both, and to conduct them in the true way to heaven. This year I have, for seven months, held a weekly meeting, for the instruction of the young of my flock ; and I bless thee for the pleasure that it gives me, and for the interest which was felt in it. Make these, my young scholars, thy disciples indeed, ornaments to the congregation, and a blessing to their pastor. I acknowledge with gratitude the kind reception my Catechism has met with. Oh ! that the young who are employed in learning it, may be all taught of God, may be animated by the spirit which it recommends, and be partakers of the blessings which it exhibits. This year, though the summer commenced with some weeks of bleak and cold weather, thou didst at last give the genial influence of the sun, and the mildest breezes, by which we had an earlier harvest than any I ever witnessed, and plenty is now spread over all our borders. When I think how scarcity, and a high price of provisions, would have aggravated the discontents and the misery which now prevail in the manufacturing districts of the country, I feel the peculiar value of so seasonable a mercy. The state of the nation is indeed dark and threatening. Political disaffection hath appeared to an extent, and with an audacity, unexampled before ; and those vast assemblages of the people, their violent speeches, and insolent demands, indicate that a tempest is gathering, whose burst will be terrible. Oh ! still the tumults of the people, and, by a revival of our trade, and the diffusion of the spirit of wisdom and patience, banish complaints from our streets. Oh ! direct the leaders of the nation to such measures as thou wilt bless for reviving commerce, alleviating hardships, and maintaining order, integrity, and peace. This year will be remembered, for the means that have been employed for reuniting the two parties in the Secession. May that candour and forbearance, wisdom and charity, be imparted, which are necessary to effect this union, and to render it permanent and happy ; and may it lead to the extension of our efforts

in the cause of Christ, and to commend the spirit of the Gospel to those who have been hitherto prejudiced against it, from the divisions of its professors. Soon after the last return of this night, my uncle was removed from the world in a way more sudden than that of my mother. We were permitted to see her for more than an hour in the last struggle, but no human eye saw him depart, no human hand was nigh to give the least help or relief.* O let me not boast of to-morrow, or expect a lengthened sickness, to prepare for death; let me now be ready. Let my uncle's bequest to us, be received as from thee, and be sanctified by thy blessing, and improved to thy glory; and while we think of his incorruptible integrity, his public spirit, his accuracy, and attention to business, his knowledge of the world, and his power of wit and pleasantry, may we be thankful for having a relation so respectable and useful in life, and so much regretted in his death. O let me live in thy fear, and die in thy kind ministrations and gracious welcome to heaven. Amen.

MEDITATION XII.—NOVEMBER 21, 1820.

On the twelfth return of that solemn night in which my mother left us to be with thee, I beseech thee to lead me to such meditations as will improve my heart, and to such pursuits as will have a beneficial influence on my future conduct. O prepare me for my death, which may be as sudden. Lord grant it may be as happy. Remembering, that while she was eminent in all the qualities which render a wife the ornament, and a mother the blessing of her dwelling, she was distinguished for the fervent piety that walks with God, may I cultivate the power of godliness, and be enabled to add to the kindness of a brother and the fidelity of the minister, the sanctity and the devotion of a Christian. I would call to remembrance what my father was, to animate my desire to be like him, a man of God. While I read the books that he studied, may the spirit of wisdom that rested

* Bain Whit, Esq. W. S., Edinburgh.

on him descend on me. While I preach the doctrines which were the themes of his ministry, may it be with his impression of their value, and with his experience of their power; and while I pursue the course in which he walked among his people, may it be in that fear of the Lord, and with that meekness, and prudence, and kindliness, by which he was so eminently characterized. This year has been a series of mercy. Respect, usefulness, and comfort, and capacity for labour, have been continued. O raise me to more fervid gratitude, and to a more ardent zeal for thy glory, and the salvation of souls. The rheumatism in my back, which gave me severe pain in the last spring, and made me feel many anxieties, lest its continuance and increase should unfit me for my pastoral labours, has been completely removed,—I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. This year thou hast removed our good old king. May the remembrance of his virtues be a monitor to his successors. May the British nation be ever adorned with such piety as his; and while history shall record the military glories and the commercial success of his reign, let the people look to the Christian graces of his character; and let this important lesson be felt in high places, that while admiration follows the career of greatness, love cherishes the memory and blesses the name of the good. This year, too, five ministers of our body have died, all eminent for piety, and with three of whom I was intimately acquainted. May these repeated mementos be felt in all our pulpits. Blessed be God that our church has been blessed with such able ministers of the New Testament, and that such testimony has been borne to the power of religion in the virtues of their lives, the hope of their deaths, and the fragrance of their names. This year has been distinguished by the consummation of the union betwixt the two branches of the Secession; and blessed was I in witnessing a scene so solemn, and yet so delightful, and marked by the spirit of devotion and love. May that spirit ever rest on the United Church. May it be like a dew from the Lord, in all the districts of our land, and be ever distinguished by pure principle, en-

lightened zeal, and liberal charity. This year my brother William has been married; O may this event be for his good. Bless him and his partner in their basket and store, in soul and body, for time and for eternity. May they live in thy fear. May he succeed in business, and grow in wisdom. May he tread in his father's steps, and may she be blessed with my mother's spirit. This year will be noted for the trial of the Queen, and for the ferment which it hath excited. May she be enabled to act in such a manner as to gain the favour of the wise and the good; and may this afflicting process be overruled for promoting morality in high places; and, while I think of the odious implications to which she has subjected herself, I bless thee for a mother who lived in every virtue, and died with a spotless name. I have been busied this year in preparing a second volume of *Sacramental Addresses* for the public. Prosper the design, I beseech thee, and accept of that offering of charity to which its profits are to be devoted. O give it acceptance and utility. God of my life, let me ever live to thee. Lord of my death, let me die in thee. Amen.

MEDITATION XIII.—NOVEMBER 21, 1821.

ON the thirteenth return of that solemn night in which my mother left this world to go to the Father, it becomes me to express my gratitude to God, that I am yet in the land of the living, and that though death hath since that time been visiting many dwellings around us, it has not been permitted to enter ours. O that the memory of my mother may operate with more force than ever in strengthening within me all the pious and kind affections, and in leading me to all the exercises of a holy life. This year has been marked by the death of the last of my uncles, and by the same disease by which thou didst change my father's countenance, and send him away. and while this event has so forcibly recalled so many traits of his character, so many scenes of his life, and so many circumstances of his departure, may his wisdom and benignity, his faith and patience, be more

sedulously followed, considering the end of his conversation.* This year another of my father's most valued friends has died, who was a bright ornament of our church for wisdom and elegance, a friendly disposition, and a most active spirit, and to him I was called to pay the last tribute of respect, as my own and my father's friend.† Blessed be God that I was strengthened for that painful service. Three ministers besides him have within six months been called into eternity, and all suddenly.‡ May mementos so solemn strike my heart as they ought. Keep me from paralyzing fear and from presumptuous indifference, but let my loins be ever girt, and my lamp ever burning. O, if I am to die suddenly, let me not die unprepared; let me die in a scene, and in exercise suited to the character and work of a Christian minister. I have set my worldly affairs in order, O that I may have all that readiness in state, in heart, and frame, the necessity of which I have urged on others. Blessed be God for the acceptance of my new work, and for the third edition of the former volume. May the acceptance excite in me becoming gratitude. I have built a house for myself this year,§ but never will I forget what a house of mercy the old manse has been. May God go with me to the new habitation; may its name be,—The Lord is there,—and may wisdom, purity, contentment, and peace, ever abide in it. Blessed be God the country is at peace, and prosperity is returning to it. May its righteousness be like the waves of the sea. May the death

* He here alludes to the father of the late Dr John Belfrage of Slateford.

† Dr Husband, senior minister of Queen Ann Street Church, Dunfermline. Dr Belfrage preached the funeral sermon, which was afterward published at the request of the congregation.

‡ These were Mr Reid, reformed Presbyterian minister at Lauriston,—Mr Brown of the Relief Church, Falkirk. He was from home assisting his son-in-law, at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, and suddenly dropped down in the pulpit, and expired. The third was Mr Brownlee, of the second United Secession Church, Falkirk, who also fell down in the pulpit while preaching in the evening. The only words he uttered were, "Send for Dr Belfrage." This was accordingly done, and Dr Belfrage concluded the services of the evening, which death had so awfully interrupted.

§ His house at Rose Park.

of the Queen produce a conviction of the folly of all the turmoils of ambition. Blessed be God for peace in Israel, for a congregation so steady, affectionate, and prosperous ; for health, tranquillity, and domestic comfort. To me to live, may it be Christ, and to die, gain. Amen.

MEDITATION XIV.—NOVEMBER 21, 1822.

ON the fourteenth return of the night of my mother's translation, I desire to recall to remembrance its solemn circumstances, and O let not the exercise be a vain form, but may it yield the peaceable fruits of wisdom and of piety. Blessed be God that in sisters so devoted to my interest, so attentive to my comfort, and so solicitous for my welfare, I find so much of their mother's heart and hand. O that thou wouldst bless them indeed, and bless them for ever. I have left the manse in which I had lived betwixt forty and fifty years, and out of which I had never slept a single night, while in Falkirk or near it. It was with regret I quitted a place where every spot was stamped by the traces of the religious exercises, the sweet kindness, the peace, the sufferings, the enjoyments, and the death of my parents. Wherever I go let the memory of them walk with me by day, and rest with me by night. Blessed be the Lord for this commodious habitation, which he hath provided for me, in a situation so beautiful. O teach me in all its conveniences to mark thy care, in all its sweets to see thy beauty, in its delightful quietness to meet with thee, in its extensive prospects to behold the hills rejoicing, the woods blossoming, and the vales flourishing through thee. May it be holy to the Lord, may it be blessed and sanctified by thy constant presence, and in it may I live, and may I die with thee and to thee. I have this year through thy great goodness been enabled to give to the world, "Sketches of Life and Character." O may the excellencies exhibited in it be carefully cultivated by me, and abound among ministers and people. This year I have met with two great deliverances ; thou didst redeem my life from destruction, when I had fallen into the Canal ;

preserved me from falling from my horse, when in the greatest danger of being thrown down on my head. O may the angel who has redeemed me in such cases, redeem me from all evil. A few days ago, a minister dropped down dead on the highway, and remained in that state during the night, and in the morning was found cold and stiff. Blessed be God that the mortal stroke came not to my mother in such circumstances, that her last exercise and feeling was that of piety ; that her last struggle was in her chamber, and that her last end was attended by the children of her heart, and that there was nought in her previous character to stamp a single spot in the closing scene. May I, O God, be enabled to prepare immediately to go hence ; O my God take me not away in the midtime of my days ; O take me not away unprepared ; O let me live in the exercise of every pious affection, and in the practice of every commanded duty ; and O that I may die in my home, that my eyes may be closed by the hands of those that love me, my dwelling occupied, and my books improved, and my joy fulfilled by them, and that I may be a monument of the power of that grace in which I wish to trust in every scene, to point in every exhortation, and to exult in my whole ministry. To that grace I now commit my soul and body, my friends and people, and on us all may it rest for ever and ever. Amen.

MEDITATION XV.—NOVEMBER 21, 1823.

On the fifteenth return of that night in which my mother was received into glory, I would engage in these recollections by which her memory may conduce to promote the best interests of my soul. Blessed be God that I am still spared in vigorous health, and amid increasing comfort. The scene of beauty is still improving around me. O let me not be like the heath in the desert, barren and unfruitful in the work of the Lord, but in piety and goodness and spiritual prosperity, may I be like a well-watered garden, and as a field which the Lord hath blessed. Now, therefore, let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be

before thee for ever, for if thou bless it, O Lord, it shall be blessed for ever; O bless it with such piety and resignation, purity, gratitude, and peace, as thou didst our dwelling-place after the death of my parents. This year my infant niece, named from my mother, has been removed by death; that olive plant thou hast taken to paradise. May her parents be led by the sorrows of nature to the consolations of God, be enriched with wisdom, and formed to the feelings and the practice of piety. This year I have published a Monitor to Families; may these discourses be blessed for promoting domestic piety and domestic comfort. May the tribute to my father, in its close, be a memento to his people, to his surviving friends, and to myself to follow his faith, considering the end of his conversation. Another dear friend in the ministry is removed this year.* His young orphans I commit to thy care, and may the piety of their father live in them. His last days were embittered by strife among his people.† Blessed be God that my congregation is so distinguished for peace and harmony. I have received from them a gown as a tribute of respect, and blessed be God that my wearing it hath excited no dissatisfaction. May this gratifying mark of public regard encourage me in my duty; may it be accompanied with the token of thy approbation, and may I seek the honour that comes from God. I have been thrice called away to preach, to plead the cause of mercy, of education, and of evangelizing the heathen. Blessed be God for the aid he vouchsafed, and the testimony which he gave to the word of his grace. May the society formed for the destitute families of departed ministers of our church flourish, and may the widow and the fatherless sit under its shadow with delight. May my studies and my duty be my consolation, and in my ministry may I be blessed by seeing the Lord's work pros-

* The Rev. James M'Farlane of Queen Ann Street Church, Dunfermline, of whom Dr Belfrage wrote the memoir which appeared in the Christian Monitor Magazine.

† Disputes had unfortunately arisen about the calling of a minister to succeed Dr Husband, as colleague to Mr M'Farlane.

pering in my hand. In my mother's blessing may I live, and die in her hope. Amen.

MEDITATION XVI.—NOVEMBER 21, 1824.

ON this sixteenth return of the day of my mother's death, I would come before thee with grateful feelings for the health and comfort we have enjoyed, and regret the little improvement of these mercies, that, while many have been visited by sickness in the dwellings around us, death hath not been allowed to enter. These sixteen years we have been in health, and in domestic love. We know that death will come; and, to whichever of us it may come first, O let us be as well prepared as our mother was, and may it bring the same comforts to survivors. This year has been rich in mercy. My labours have been sweetened to me by peculiar marks of thy favour, and my mind soothed by the light of thy countenance. Truly, O Lord, I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds. I bless thee, O Lord, for the very favourable reception the "Monitor to Families" has met with. O may I be impressed with this, and be more active in the work of the Lord. I have this year published a Sacramental Catechism. I would lay it at the foot of the Cross; may it be the means of promoting the end of Christ's death, and winning the hearts of the young to the love of that Saviour who has done so much for them. O may the young of my flock be the sheep of thy pasture; and enable me to lead them to all that is pious, by enforcing the lessons of truth and duty. This year the University of St Andrews have conferred on me a title of high honour, and done it in a manner so grateful to my feelings. May the members of that University be the light and guide of youth to every thing that is ennobling and virtuous. May I feel it a stimulus to more diligence in study, purity of heart, and refinement of mind, and to avoid whatever is mean or degrading. O grant me to view all things as coming from God.

This year a neighbouring minister has lost his only daugh-

ter, his accomplished companion, and the pride of his life.* Now his house is left to him desolate. O may he be led to thee, and to taste and feel the sympathy of a Saviour; and may the mournful loss of one every way so fitted to adorn society, teach us to "cease from man," and raise up friends to gladden, and in room of those whom thou wast pleased to remove. O Lord, unite me more truly to thee. O may the piety and peace of my parents dwell with me in seasons of infirmity, and decline, and fretfulness. May I be supported by their hopes and consolations, and may the God of peace be with us for ever. Amen.

MEDITATION XVII.—NOVEMBER 21, 1825.

ON the seventeenth return of that night in which my dearest mother was translated to thee, I would dwell on those recollections, and on that prayer which is most suited to a season so solemn. O impress its lessons with more power on my heart than ever, and enable me to live more under their influence than I have ever yet done. O give me a mind more devoted to holy wisdom, and a heart devoted to thee and heavenly objects; and, by this night's meditation by my mother's grave, may my preparation for death be much advanced, and my soul more impressed with the graces of her character. This year I have still to sing of mercy. Through thy blessing, comfort, plenty, respect, friendship, and activity have marked its course. This year I have been to London, to plead the cause of its Missionary Society; and blessed be God for the safe voyage to London, and from it; for the peace and harmony among my flock during my absence, and the kind reception my humble labours met with. O may that society be blessed more and more, with wisdom in its plans, love in its spirit, supply to its funds, and success in its efforts. May the other societies for which I was called to preach be the instrument of extensive utility, and

* He alludes to the daughter of Dr Wilson, minister of the parish of Falkirk.

of the happiest feelings to their members. Blessed be God for the dear home that was opened to me in London. May thy rich and sweet mercy rest on that kind family, and may its venerable head be long spared as a son of consolation. O bless his benefice with utility, to the forlorn, the unfortunate, and the helpless. I have seen the University of Oxford, the seat of literature and science ; may its walls, its palaces, its groves, be filled with the spirit of wisdom, the homage of piety ; and let our country be blessed by the union of science with love of religion, with civil liberty and domestic and foreign peace. In all my wanderings may I see more and more of thy guidance and care ; O may I ever be enabled to trust in thee. In my visit to a sick friend, whom thou hast been pleased to chasten sore, I have led her to the footstool of mercy. O strengthen and confirm the feeble knees ; O brighten the pale face, and make the sunk heart to rejoice in thee ; and in all thy dealings with me and my family, may they be crowned with mercy and peace. Amen.

MEDITATION XVIII.—NOVEMBER 21, 1826.

On the eighteenth return of the night of my mother's death, I come to thy throne of grace, lamenting that, from the recollection of that scene, I have not derived more benefit, beseeching thee to render me more serious and humble, more watchful and more active for thee. How eager she was for the coming Sabbath, and by early and earnest prayer on the morning of thy holy day, she wrestled with thee for the divine blessing on my ministry. O may I be actuated by such a spirit, and be blessed Sabbath after Sabbath with thy countenance. I would feel, too, with what deep humility and contrition of heart for sins, she set apart days for humiliation and prayer. O grant to me, as thou didst to her, repentance unto life. Often did she wash the feet of her Redeemer with tears ; and with such feelings as hers let my heart throb with holy emotion, and let my eyes flow with tears of gratitude. This has been a year of uncommon drought

and heat ; and never have I seen an October and a November so bright, calm, and lovely. O may it be to me a token of that kindness by which my entrance into old age shall be sweetened, and by which the last months of life shall be blessed. This has been a season of sore distress in this country, through the failure of many in business, and stagnation of trade. Many families are in misery, and the loudest appeals have been made to the public compassion in their behalf. Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee ? O give employment to the industrious, bread to the famishing, and hope to the desponding. Arise, O God, for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies sake. This year I have brought within a little of the end, my "Discourses to the Aged." How much has the remembrance of what was valuable in my mother aided me in my delineations of character, and my lessons of duty and comfort. That work I would lay at the foot of my Redeemer ; O bless it for giving light and peace to many in the evening of life, and make the feeble and the helpless to sing for joy. I have finished, through thy good mercy, on Sabbath, my sermons on the Christian Armour. May the Captain of our salvation number me among those whom he will conduct to glory ; may he aid us in pleading his cause, and fighting his battles ; and let this be our determination,—we will be faithful to the death. This year, too, I have been reminded, by a bleeding at the nose, at the close of my visitations, that I must soon put off this tabernacle ; O that my bones were crying out, O living God for thee, my heart renovated, my lamp burning, my life spotless ! May I meet death in hope, and die in peace. This year my sister Mary has been long and sorely chastened ; blessed be God she was not given over unto death ; thou hast brought her out of the depths ; we would bless God for that peace of mind, and that calmness and spirituality under her affliction ; restore her if it is thy holy will ; sanctify it to the family ; and, O let this house, as in times past, be filled with the melody of joy and health, and be the spot of purity and peace. O give the light

of wisdom to my studies,—the spirit of power to my ministry. This will give life to my soul, and the peace of God to my heart. Let me be a follower of my holy parents, and hereafter be associated with them in rest for ever. Amen.

MEDITATION XIX.—NOVEMBER 21, 1827.

On the nineteenth return of that night in which my mother died, it becomes me to reflect how much nearer I am to that eternity into which she has entered. O that I could say that I am nearer to that heaven where she is happy. Twice I have been reminded, by sudden and severe, though short indisposition, that my strength is not the strength of stones, nor my bones brass. Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is that I may know how frail I am. Let me be more diligent in preparation for eternity; and let the remembrance of my mother's seriousness, piety, and fervour, make me shudder at the idea of becoming careless or carnal, either in my works as a Christian or as a minister. This year I have lost a venerable friend, whose hoary head was indeed a crown of glory, and who, in every sphere of duty, approved himself a master in Israel. May the power of his example be long felt in that church of which he was such an ornament, and the lustre of his name be felt by me as an impulse to piety.* I have preached a series of discourses on the history of John the Baptist. O may the admiration I have felt and expressed of the sanctity of that holy man, be my excitement to cultivate superiority to the world and devotedness to wisdom. And this year I have finished my expositions of the book of Psalms, after the severe labour of many years. May the Psalms which were the song of my mother in the house of her pilgrimage, be the solace of life and death to me. My volume to the Aged has met with a reception for which I owe the deepest gratitude; and a third edition of my "Discourses to the Young" has been sent forth from the press. O let their influence be felt in the author's heart; and let me be

* Dr Waugh, of London.

the grateful instrument of divine mercy, in guiding youth to piety and preparing age for heaven. This year I have founded a library for the young in the congregation. O may God smile on the institution; and may it flourish in the continuance of my people and in holy utility. May it promote a taste for reading among the young, save them from wasting time in indolence and folly, and enrich their minds with the best principles and maxims of conduct. Thou hast turned again the captivity of our land, revived its trade, given employment to the industrious, and banished complaint from our streets; our barns are filled with plenty. After a harvest marked by three interpositions of Providence, in which, in the season of terror, thou didst make the weather to brighten, and the husbandman to resume his toils, O may thy goodness in providence and thy grace in the Gospel, excite us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. Amen.

CHAPTER IX

HIS LATTER DAYS AND DEATH.

Symptoms of declining health. Letter. Jaunt to the Highlands. Letter to Mrs Belfrage. Return. Letter. Occupation on the last night of the year. Sermon on the first Sabbath of the year. Conclusion of sermon. Continues pastoral labours. Epistolary extracts. Proposed jaunt. Letters to Mrs H——. Last sermon in Falkirk. Concluding remarks. Goes to Airthrey Wells. Letter to his sisters. Visits Blackford. Preaches in Dunblane Cathedral. Last sermon. Bridge of Teith. Returns to Rose Park. Pulpit supplied by the Presbytery. Last Sacrament. Last Table address. Evening directions. Becomes worse. Letter. Visits to the neighbourhood. Last Presbytery. Goes to Edinburgh. Death of Reverend J. B. Paterson. Letter. Visits Melrose and Abbotsford. Returns worse. Last public duty. Interviews with friends. Conduct in Affliction. Deathbed. Interviews with Professor Balmer and Mr Smart. Death. Funeral, &c. &c.

To the pious, the whole “path of the just” is an interesting scene. It is gratifying to be made privy even to the very first steps which were taken in the “ways of pleasantness,” and to compare the earliest developements of Christian character, with their progressive improvement, till they have been matured into that fulness which, in the close of life, attracts the notice, and commands the respect, of “the faithful who are in Christ Jesus.” It is to the *latter days* of the upright, however, that we look forward with a peculiar anxiety. In proportion as we love consistency, and wish well

to the truth, we desire to see his path advancing like the sun "to the perfect day." It is in the view of death and judgment that religious sincerity is most powerfully tested; and, upon the approach of these solemn realities, there have been many painful discoveries of formalism and deceit, where, from previous professions, faith and hope were expected to triumph. It is not strange, then, though our feelings should become more intense as we draw near to the winding up of the drama of a man's mortal existence,

"In life's last scene, what prodigies surprise,
Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise."

DR JOHNSON.

Between the earlier and latter days of Dr Belfrage, there was only the difference which is produced in the true saint by increased experience of Divine things, and more elevated devotion. The mellowness of his piety was the proof that, in the autumn of his life, there was no falling off in spiritual growth. The "fruits of the spirit" flourished upon this "branch" of the "vine," to the last moment. As we proceed to disclose the parting intercourse of Dr Belfrage with his family, and friends, and congregation, the reader will, with pleasure observe, that, like the calm and holy tenor of his previous life, its closing scene was uprightness and peace.

Naturally of a robust constitution, Dr Belfrage enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health till within two years of his death. Upon the decease of his favourite sister Elizabeth, his health visibly declined.* This melancholy event powerfully affected him. Symptoms of her disease appeared upon himself; and, about this time, he was copiously bled, blistered, and restricted in his diet. He continued in a very weak state during the spring of 1834. About this period, he thus writes to a friend:—

"*Falkirk, 17th April, 1834.*

"I have been poorly for three weeks past. It commenced with inflammation in my left eye; and, while blistered for this on

* Miss E. Belfrage died in December 1833.

the neck, I unhappily caught cold, and this produced a most severe inflammation in the tendon of the neck, which occasioned great pain for some time. I am now in a great measure relieved, and am so much stronger that I hope to be able to preach on Sabbath. I have enjoyed uncommon health for a long course of time, and have much reason to bless God, of whom I may well say, the Lord was ready to save me. I will not be at the Synod, as I dare not yet venture from home. I suppose next week will be occupied with the choice of Professors. Mr M—— thinks that *four* will be chosen —— . I will get all the news from you. My wish and opinion is, that *one* would be quite sufficient, if the choice is judiciously made.”

His strength partially returned in the summer. “ I am, through God’s great goodness, (he remarks in another letter written in July), wonderfully strengthened, and walked yesterday more than eight miles, visiting and preaching. O to be disposed to say, with due humility and gratitude, “ the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; and he also is become my salvation.” In the month of August, he took an excursion to the Western Highlands, along with an intimate friend; and, when at Kilmun, he writes as follows to Mrs Belfrage :—

“ Kilmun, Wednesday Evening.

“ MY DEAREST MARGARET,—You would receive the hurried letter I wrote on Monday. I had but a few minutes to write, but I was eager to improve them, to relieve your kind anxiety about me. I felt very dull on Monday; walked out in the evening, and saw the vault where the family of Argyle have been buried for ages. There is nothing grand about it; but there is something solemn in the spot where the king of terrors tramples the pride of this world in the dust.

“ Dr B——’s people procured a bed for me in the neighbourhood. It was very comfortable; but I was so dull in being away from you and little Harry, that I could not sleep so readily as usual. On Tuesday, Dr and Mrs B—— set out in a coach for Inverary, which is twenty-one miles from this. We reached

Inverary at one, but it began to rain, and continued wet till five. Then we went out and saw the castle. It is a very grand place, but dull and gloomy, as only three servants are in it. The library is large, but consists mostly of books of literature. We then walked up a high hill at the back, like that which we climbed at Comrie. Sweet were my thoughts about you; and it was a delight to me to think that I might yet be permitted to bring you to this charming place, and our little boy with us. Mrs B—— often said how she wishes to see you west. This morning we had to be on board a steam-boat, at half past three; and you may believe my sleep was not long. We sailed above a hundred miles, and reached Kilmun betwixt two and three. Poor Mrs B—— is quite knocked up, and has been very sick since we got here. It was in kindness to me, she took the jaunt. I am quite well. We are within an hour's sail of Rothesay. I mean to be there to-morrow, to call upon Mrs G——, and to return to dinner. There was an American gentleman, with his lady, in the boat to-day, and a little boy, about two years old; and, when I saw him sporting on the deck, and walking, as well as he could, to his father, and touching his knee, my delightful boy seemed to be sporting before me, and I felt what a treasure John Henry was to his mother and me. Tell my dear Harry this story.

“ I am managing matters as well as I can. O how I value and bless the kindness of my much-loved wife, whose care of me is so sweet and precious. May the Lord reward your goodness, and may his gracious arm sustain you fully and tenderly. I see the Redeemer spreading his wings over you, my dearest love, and our little Harry; and I feel happy in viewing you under his care. I shall take a short jaunt on Tuesday, in this romantic neighbourhood, and come to Glasgow on Saturday. I will be home, through God's mercy, on Monday. I am wearying much to be home. I expect to find your dear letter lying for me at Dr B——'s. Give Harry some kisses for Papa. Heavens kindest blessing be on you both.”

From this short but pleasant excursion, during which he had been so kindly attended upon by two of his earliest and most warm-hearted friends, he returned to Rose Park, much

recruited both in health and spirits. He adverts to this jaunt in the following extract from a letter :—

“ I was eight days in the west ; and Dr B——, and his lady, went with me to Inverary. The weather was not very favourable on some of the days ; but I enjoyed the wild grandeur of the Highland mountains very much, and the stillness and beauty of the lakes. We were often talking about you, and regretting that you were not with us. Dr B—— expects a great treat next Tuesday. The feast of wisdom is to be in the forenoon, and the flow of soul, and of something else, in the evening. I do not think I shall be there. I am still gathering strength ; and Mrs Belfrage, and our dear little boy, are both well. She begs to be remembered very kindly to Mrs H——, and the young ladies, in which I most cordially join.”

On the Monday evening of his Sacrament, in the end of October, he was seized with a copious bleeding at the nose. He was much relieved by this ; and, after it, continued for a while to gain strength. He now devoted himself, with all his usual assiduity, to his pastoral labours, preaching twice and sometimes three times every Sabbath. His heart was truly in his duties ; and he made it his meat and drink to do his Master's will. The spiritual improvement of his people lay at this time much upon his mind, and he engaged much in prayer, that God would be pleased to revive his work in the midst of them. On the last Sabbath of 1834, he intimated from his pulpit that he wished the members of the congregation to set apart the hour from seven to eight, upon the last evening of the year, for religious meditation and prayer, that God would cause pure and undefiled religion to flourish in their hearts and families. On the 31st day of December, which was cold and tempestuous, he went out to the country to a diet of examination. The evening was dark and stormy, but he walked home at the risk of his life, that he might join with his people, at the same hour, in devotional exercises. On reaching Rose Park, he was drenched with rain, and very much exhausted. His spirit, however,

was in a delightful frame ; and his family will not soon forget the fervent and affectionate manner in which, upon that night, he supplicated God to bless his flock, and to make him a blessing to them. On the Sabbath following, the first Sabbath of the new year, he preached from these words, in the 39th Psalm, “ Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am.” He concluded this discourse, which breathed throughout the spirit of one who identified himself with its subject, with these interesting observations :—

“ How affecting were these words of Dr Clark’s, after more than fifty-six years spent in most laborious activity in the work of the Lord :— I have never fallen out with life ; but I have often fallen out with myself, because I have not spent it better. To remedy this, I should be glad with my present knowledge and experience, to live life over again ; I do not admire the thought,

‘ Life does little more supply,
Than just to look about us and to die.’

“ ‘ This sentiment, practically regarded, would be the creed of the sluggard and the coward. No, there is in life much to be done, much to be learned, and much to be suffered. We should live in time in reference to eternity. This I know, that God’s mercy has had a great deal to do to bring us thus far. It will have more to do to bring us to the verge of the eternal world ; and it will have most of all to do to bring us to glory.’ Let us think, then, of the advantages which will result from such a prayer as is the text. It will guard us from presumption, which flatters us with the hope that we shall see many good days, and rejoice in them all,—a presumption which aggravates the shock of adversity, and the terrors of death. It will keep us from wasting time on trifles, and from thoughtlessness and levity. It will claim every moment for preparation for eternity, and it will make us so familiar with death, that we shall meet with it as with an event which we have long anticipated, and for which we

have laboured to be prepared. It is while trembling in the dust, in such a prayer, that we feel our descent into the grave softened; and, while all things earthly are sliding from our grasp, that we lay hold on eternal life. Let us be solicitous that God may make us heirs of a nobler life than that of nature. There is a life which we share with inferior animals; this spiritual life is the life of God,—the life of angels. To this life there is no end; it shall pass into life everlasting. Often have we heard the voice of death and sin around us, ‘I am come to kill and destroy; but Christ says, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly!’ O let us set our hearts upon this life, in which there is no death to close, no grave to swallow; after which no hell to perish; over which there is no foe to triumph; but which hath grace for its fountain, heaven for its sphere, salvation for its victory, eternity for its duration. In fine, let us all listen to the word of admonition which God is addressing to us on the present occasion. To those who are beginning the year in security, God now says, ‘Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and I will give you rest.’ To those burdened with guilt and fear, ‘Come unto me.’ To those on whom the year is opening in prosperity, ‘Rejoice with trembling.’ To those on whom it is opening in tempests gathering and raging, ‘Humble yourselves.’ To those on whom it opens in loneliness and tears, he calls to resignation and hope; and to those who fear his wrath, or apprehend their days are extinct, and that the grave is ready for them, he says, point more devotedly, more steadily, more entirely to eternity; and may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all. Amen.”

In the beginning of 1835, he had a severe attack of influenza, by which he was again greatly reduced. No entreaty, however, could dissuade him from attending to even the most laborious of his pastoral duties. This was the last year of his existence in the church below; but, like all its predecessors, it was fully occupied by him in his Master’s

service. Though very weak, and really unfit for much exertion, he persisted in going through his annual visitations and examinations, both of which duties he entirely discharged. When the weather was stormy, he could not be prevailed upon to defer his visit to another time ; and, though often solicited to do so, even by the tears of his most affectionate partner, he would only reply, “ Would you keep me from my Master’s work ? ” He persevered in these arduous duties to the end of March, and, for the seven previous months, he had preached in his own pulpit every Sabbath. The following are extracts from letters written during the spring of this year, and are descriptive of his state and feelings about this period.

“ I have been labouring under the effects of a severe cold and influenza for some time, which has weakened me very much. By the help of God, I have been carrying on my usual labours, but am more exhausted than I used to be. Unless I become much stronger, it will not be in my power to engage in extra services during the summer, and it will be best for you not to depend upon me. My wish is to be with you, but I cannot give any pledge till I see what the Lord is to do with me. Many thanks for your good wishes for me and mine ; may they be returned in blessings into your own bosom. I finished my lectures on Genesis on the last Sabbath of the year, and have now got to the Millenium in my lectures on the Revelations. I owe much to the all-sufficient grace of the Redeemer, and in it I will trust for ever.”

The above was written in January ; the following was written in February :—

“ I had your kind letter last week. I feel myself a little firmer in health ; but I have been urged to go for some weeks to the Highlands, or elsewhere, in the summer, as most necessary to the establishment of my health ; and my plan is to go away as soon after the Sacrament here as possible. Such being my purpose, if God will, I cannot engage to be with you. Mr S—— of Linlithgow will, if you ask

him, readily come to you. I feel much gratified by your sympathies and kind wishes. *My mind is quite calm.* I feel myself in the hands of a kind Father, and am resolved to wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and to stay myself upon that arm of mercy, which never has failed me, and I humbly trust never will. What an affecting death is this of Dr Morrison in India ! I was often with him while last in London, and, with all his learning and fame, he was singularly modest and mild. He had prepared his own funeral sermon. Lord Napier, too, has soon followed him. Wishing Mrs C——, and your dear boys, and yourself, the continued kindness of the God you love, I am,” &c.

It was now evident, from his increasing weakness, that he must, for a season at least, enjoy relaxation, both from study and duty. He resolved, therefore, to go for some time to Airthrey Wells, and after that to proceed on a jaunt to the English Lakes. He addressed the following letters, at this period, to Mrs H—— of B——k, one of his most confidential friends and correspondents:—

“ *Rose Park, April 9, 1835.*

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I must have appeared unkind in not answering sooner your letter, breathing so much of the spirit of kindness ; but it did not reach me till the 30th of March, and must have been a quarter of a year in the hands of Mr M——. It delighted me when I read it, and my only regret was, that I had not enjoyed it sooner, and shown, by an earlier answer, how much I felt interested in all your concerns. I am much better than I was last spring. I have gone through my usual congregational labour, and felt no difficulty in it, till, in the middle of January, I had an attack of influenza, which weakened me not a little ; and, though my strength is improving very much, I am advised to change the air, and to take relaxation from study and labour, during part, at least, of summer. This, by the blessing of God, will make me quite as vigorous as ever. I mean, in the month of May, to go for a fortnight to the Wells at Airthrey, and, in the beginning of July, to pass by Berwick on my way to Durham and York. It will be delightful to me to meet with so

valued a friend as you, to cultivate the friendship of your excellent partner, and to mark in your children the fair presence of His image and care, to whose grace they have been so often commended.

“ Mr H—— will be so kind as to direct me to what objects might interest me in my tour ; and I should like to spend a Sabbath in Berwick, and give my friend, Mr B—— a sermon, and be feasted with one from him. The cathedrals at Durham and York, the palaces and libraries of the bishops, &c., are the chief objects to which my curiosity points in my tour ; and even the country churches, which the hand of time hath touched so gently, and which, by the stillness and beauty with which they are surrounded, invite the heart to soothing meditation, are features in the landscape of England, on which my mind delights to dwell ; while the friends who have gone from me to heaven, seem to say to me, ‘ Come up hither.’ Providence hath given me new ties of duty and affection to earth, which would render the lengthening of my life and tranquillity desirable ; but, as your revered and much-loved father used to say, ‘ These things are in better hands than ours.’ O for the lively faith, which effectually quiets the heart, and which rejoices in hope, that ‘ the Lord will give that which is good !’

“ Mrs Belfrage and the children are well. Measles have been raging around us, but they have escaped : they were uneasy and sick on Saturday and Sabbath last, and we felt anxious ; but they are now in their usual gaiety. Oh ! it is delightful to mark the care of Heaven over the young of our hearts ; and I wish to exhibit the Redeemer to our little boy, as all holy, lovely, and good, as the best way of his knowing what is excellent, and being disposed to love it. Mrs B—— and I are in great hopes of seeing Mr H—— and you here in August. A visit of you here would do me more good than all my jaunts. John Henry would soon tell you that he loves you ; and if you ask him where, would lay his hand on his heart.

“ We had a visit of Mr Y—— lately, and, though I had never spoken to him before, we soon got into each other’s hearts. He is a very kind, upright, and devout man ; and I felt, when I heard him give vent to his feelings, that somewhat of your father’s mantle had fallen on him. We had a passing call from him on

Tuesday, as he was passing to Stirling. He tells me his little boy is better. May the Lord keep him as the apple of his eye. I was glad that, in these days of dispute and alienation, Mr Y—— was well received by all parties here, and the collection he got was good.

“ Now, my very dear friend, allow me to say, write me soon, and by post. Mrs Belfrage enjoys a letter from you as much as I do myself ; and, in the wishes and prayers of friendship, you and yours occupy a chief place. She bids me assure you how much she values your kindness to me and to herself, and sends her love to the children, one of whom must keep their heart for her son. Present to your excellent husband the assurance of my very affectionate esteem.

“ I cannot say to you, Farewell, till I request your continued prayers for me and mine, and till I assure you, that I will regard and bless you to the last, as being yours, with much respect and affection.

HENRY BELFRAGE.

“ P. S.—Remember me kindly to Mr and Mrs B——.”

“ *Edinburgh, April 23, 1835.*

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I was very much delighted with your most welcome letter, and this new proof of your kind interest in my health, strengthened those feelings of gratitude and high estimation, which it is not only my duty, but my pleasure, to cherish. I have seen Mr B——, and have engaged to assist him, if the Lord will, on the first Sabbath of July.

“ Mr M—— is to be my companion in my tour. The second Sabbath we mean to spend at York, then to go over to Manchester, and return by the Lakes of Cumberland. This will be a jaunt of great benefit for confirming my health. My best enjoyment in it, will be to see you and your dear kind family.

“ Mrs B—— wishes much it was in her power to come to Berwick ; but she cannot leave the youngsters so long, and they cannot yet be taken so far from home. She bids me say, how much she is set on your visit to Rose Park, and how happy she will be in showing how much she feels your kind interest in her husband and family.

“ John Henry is sitting, if I may so call it, for his picture here. The artist has been twice with him, and has hit the mark

very well. He drew my picture about two years ago, which is thought very like. He wishes to get an engraving of it, and, when this is done, I will send a copy to you. Had your dear kind father been on earth, he would have had it in the Evangelical Magazine, that his friend Harry might appear to more advantage than he does, in one of its Numbers.

“Excuse this hurried scrawl, for which I have so little time, in the bustle of a Synod. Mrs B—— sends her kind regards to you and the dear children, whom she cherishes with much affection and pleasure, and her compliments to Mr H——, whom she honours as a truly worthy man, and kind friend. I need not say how much these sentiments and feelings are my own. Farewell, my very dear friend. May the kindest blessings of Heaven ever rest on you and yours; and believe me to be yours most affectionately and faithfully,

HENRY BELFRAGE.”

Before he left Falkirk for Airthrey, he preached in his own pulpit, on Tuesday evening, the 12th of May, previous to an election of elders. He selected for his text the 7th verse of the 87th Psalm, “As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.” This was the last sermon he preached in Falkirk. His manner was solemn and earnest beyond its usual, and it seemed as if he was averse to part on that night with his people. These were his concluding words:—

“That church must be in a very low and corrupt state, in which, as is the fact, ministers, in ordaining elders, have told their people, that they are not to look to them for religious services at funerals, or for religious visitation in sickness. How poor is the notion they must have of an elder’s duties, who would thus strip it of its best functions, to make it agreeable to the indolence and ignorance of the carnal and the worldling! Elders must be men of God, men of wisdom, men of prayer, sons of consolation. A succession of such offices the church shall have, and they that hold such offices must die. ‘I said ye are gods, but ye shall die like men;’—but their places shall be filled; the vessels of the Lord shall be carried by other hands, and the trust which

death takes from them, shall be committed to others. If God was so true to Jonadab, the son of Rechab, much more will he be so to Him, whom he has made head over all things to the Church, which is his body. ‘There shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.’

“Let us bless God for the experience which we have had of the fulfilment of the promise. Long has this congregation enjoyed the ministry of the Gospel. It is a solemn thought, a long ministry will require a long account. May the Lord enable me to abound always in the work of the Lord, and to be faithful to the death. May I finish my course with joy, and keep the faith, and fight a good fight, that I may receive the crown of righteousness. And O, my hearers, think you also of your account. Bless God for the good and holy elders, whose memory is blessed, and will be a blessing. Beseech the Lord to supply the blanks Providence has made, by men on whom he will cause a double portion of his Spirit to rest. Let us all recollect, that, however active our sphere may be, we will soon leave it, to be filled by others. Of the eight elders ordained near the commencement of my ministry, only one now survives; and, when I look around on the parishes and congregations in the neighbourhood, only two ministers are alive who were ordained before me. Seats in the church are occupied by new sitters, and houses by new families. ‘Let us work, then, the work of Him that sent us; for the night cometh, when no man can work.’”

When we reflect, that, in the course of a few months from this, the heart that conceived, and the tongue that uttered these solemn warnings, were cold in death, we are reminded of that mysterious anticipation of their decease, for which, in many instances, the pious have been signalized. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.”

On the day following, he went to Airthrey Wells, where it was anxiously hoped he would regain his health. When he had been there for a short time, he thus writes to his sisters at Falkirk :—

“As I know how anxious you will be about me, I write you these few lines. I am rather better in my stomach, but still feeble. The walk to and from the Wells fatigues me. I am wearying to be home. I hope to reach Rose Park on Wednesday. I got to Blackford, the birth-place of Sir Henry Moncreiff, on Monday, and we dine with Mr S—— on Tuesday. I have got a phaeton, which is of much service to me: riding about in it passes the time pleasantly. The weather has been cold and damp. I have been much comforted by the 30th Psalm: I hope God is blessing me by it. Write me a few lines, to let me know how you are, and how the garden is looking. Mention any thing that would interest me. Farewell, my dear sisters; the kindest blessing of the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, be with you.”

The beautiful and romantic scenery about Airthrey, highly delighted him; and he took pleasure in occasional visits to the most interesting objects in that lovely district. He was now in the vicinity of some of the earliest congregations of the Secession Church, where several of his father's contemporaries had lived and died; and where he himself, during his long ministerial life, had often spoken to the people the law and the gospel of God. On every side he was reminded of the honoured names of Campbell, and Gilfillan, and Fletcher; and it was surely not unrefreshing to his spirit, to mingle once more amid scenes hallowed by their labours, and not unlikely to be held in remembrance as the standard-ground on which the testimony of the Secession was planted by one of its intrepid founders.*

While here, he paid a visit, to which he alludes in the foregoing letter, to the village of Blackford, that he might see the church where the late Sir Henry Moncreiff and his father before him, had laboured in the ministry of the Gospel. The associations of this place with a name he so highly venerated, affected him not a little; and it was remarked, that he seemed to be very much gratified with his visit.

* Airthrey is near Stirling, where Ebenezer Erskine was minister.

At this time, he was two Sabbath-days from home ; but though from home he was not idle. He preached, on the first of these Sabbaths, for his friend Mr A——, of Dunblane. Mr A——'s congregation, at the time, were worshipping in the Old Cathedral, while a new church was being erected for them. Dr Belfrage was pleased to have thus an opportunity of preaching the Gospel where it had been so purely and ably proclaimed nearly two hundred years before, by Archbishop Leighton,—a Christian bishop, whose “works praise him in the gate,” and whom, it may be remarked in passing, Dr Belfrage somewhat resembled in the fervour of his piety and devotion. On the other Sabbath, he preached in Bridge of Teith Church ; and the compiler of the first part of these memoirs went to officiate in his place at Falkirk. It was in the pulpit of his friend at Bridge of Teith, that he preached his last sermon. The text from which he discoursed in the afternoon, was Eph. i. 3 ; “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ.” He was unusually earnest with the people, who listened with unbroken attention to his words, coming as they did on the tones of a voice which, from their earliest days, had occasionally sung to them “in sweetest strains” the song of salvation. By this time his appearance was sadly altered ; so much so, that many of the congregation scarcely recognized him. He left them pronouncing the Apostolic blessing on their heads ; and many and fervent were the prayers which followed this good man, as he descended with tremulous steps from the pulpit, to be seen and heard no more by a people in whose affections he had long held an honoured place.

Dr Belfrage returned from Airthrey considerably worse. While there, he had rather lost than gained strength. In speaking of this, he said, “I am disappointed ; but I have been forty years in active life, and have never even for one day been laid aside from illness. Ah ! how few can tell the tale !—*I will sing of mercy !*”

By the kindness of his brethren of the Presbytery of

Stirling and Falkirk, his pulpit was now regularly supplied every Sabbath, that he might obtain every advantage from an entire abstinence from his official work. He was gratefully affected by this conduct of the Presbytery. "They are very kind to me," said he; "I never knew a man meet with so much attention. They write me to let them know when I wish them to come, and they are striving with one another who will oblige me most. I look upon it as a singular mark of the divine favour." It was, however, very painful to him to be obliged to give up preaching; and when sitting in the church listening to his brethren, the tears were often seen trickling down his cheeks. When at any time it was necessary for him to perform even the smallest piece of duty, such as catechising his classes, or conversing with young people previous to the Sacrament, it seemed to revive his spirits. "I have been happier to day," he would say. "This idleness is worse than the disease. To be laid aside from preaching is like to kill me." He was even now prohibited from reading much; and one day he was heard saying, as he cast a melancholy look over his library,—“These are sealed books to me now; I am a broken vessel; the Lord has nothing more for me to do; but how much mercy is mingled with my illness. I am not racked with pain, and every thing is done for me. Few are nursed as I am, and how few have my comforts; the issue is in his hands,—let him do what seemeth him good.” Again, he would say,—“I have many ties to life. It would be desirable I should live a little longer, for these infant children; but the will of the Lord be done.” It was thus that he mourned being laid aside from his services in the sanctuary; and it was thus that he meekly bowed his head to the rod, and to him who appointed it.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed to his congregation in the month of June. Though very anxious to preside, as usual, over this solemnity, his increased weakness obliged him to devolve that duty upon another. The Rev. Mr McGilchrist, of Edinburgh, who had come to assist

him, kindly undertook to preach the action sermon for him. He had slept none during the previous night, from most oppressive and continued sickness. He went, however, to the church, and heard the opening sermon with great attention, though evidently with melancholy feelings. This was the first sacramental occasion at Falkirk, over which he had not presided; and the circumstance no doubt reminded him, that ere long he should be translated to taste of the fruit of the vine with Christ, in his Father's kingdom. Yet weak as he was, he could not sit all the time in silence. His devotional spirit was enkindled with all its wonted ardour, when the communion was about to commence, and Dr Belfrage rose once more, and for the last time, to address communicants at the Table of the Lord: interesting period in the life of one who had devoted so much of his time and talents to the composition of those beautiful addresses for which the lovers of the Saviour will continue to bless his memory. When he stood up at this time, every eye was fixed upon him, and every ear and every heart were ready to receive, what all feared were the farewell counsels of this sweet singer of Israel; and it was with these simple but soothing words that he led the hearts of his flock that day to the cross:—

“Communicants,—You are now called to the enjoyment of the highest privilege which can be attained on earth, and the full fruition of which constitutes heaven, namely, fellowship with God. Most strikingly does the apostle John point out the foundation of the privilege, when, after asserting its reality and delight, he says, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth from all sin.’ To open up the way for this gracious intercourse with the God we had offended, and to keep it open, Christ died for us, and ye who were afar off are brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. That precious blood opens our way to the sunshine of mercy, to the banquetting-house, to the stores of his grace, and to the mansions of rest. This great doctrine is the peculiar glory of the Gospel. Not the least glimpse of the scheme of atonement is contained in the theology of Mahomet. Infi-

delity scoffs at it as foolishness. Human pride sinks it in its personal merits. But the Gospel points to the cross by whose blood peace was made, and the believer's heart sings, 'O Lord, I will praise thee.' This blood cleanseth from sin of every kind, sins of every age, sins of every aggravation. Looking to it, God says, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Looking to it, Prayer says, 'For thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity, though it is great.' Looking to it, Hope says, 'Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away.' And looking to it, Gratitude says, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities.'

"Can you, O communicants! doubt the *efficacy* of this blood? It is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son,—not of a mere creature,—not of a mere man, however holy,—but of the Word made flesh,—of humanity united to the Divinity, deriving from it infinite merit to all it did and suffered as our surety. O glorious atonement!—worthy of hope for eternity,—worthy of everlasting remembrance,—worthy of the devout commemoration of earth, and the everlasting praises of heaven."

When Dr Belfrage had thus spoken, he with difficulty descended to the table, and with trembling hands presented the symbols of that "glorious atonement" to the disciples. Having done so, he resumed his former place, where he sat for some time in holy meditation. In a few minutes he arose, and dismissed the communicants from the table with these words:—

"'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.' Still, Lord, do thou claim this homage; and it is and shall be the delight of my heart to pay it for ever. Communicants! rejoice in the unceasing efficacy of this precious blood. Many things famous for their virtue have lost them, and been thrown aside as useless; but the

virtue of this blood endureth for ever. Most consoling is the thought, that it secures the pardon of the sins of your daily walk, and saves you from the rejection you deserve for your folly. It obtained for you that gracious influence by which your sanctification shall be carried on, suggests the most animating motives to holiness, and purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. So far from encouraging presumption, it stimulates to holy zeal, and calls for the deepest awe. Let this blood be sprinkled on the lintels and door-posts of your dwellings, as the security of families from the wrath of God,—the cement of their peace, and the token which marks their connexion with the household of faith; and viewing it as sprinkled on the gates of death, you will be able to say, ‘O death where is thy sting; O grave where is thy victory?’ Let this blood, then, be highest in your estimation; live in your hope, and prevail in your praise. ‘O that precious blood!’ was the exclamation of Mr Hughes, and it will be the expression of all heaven to all eternity. Go in peace; and may the God of love and peace go with you. Amen.”

When the table services were concluded, Dr Belfrage ascended his pulpit for the last time, to give what is called the *evening directions*. It was his *last*, but it was a *great* effort. His voice rose to its wonted pitch; and all the earnestness and warmth of his best days lived anew in this his concluding service. Impressed with the idea that this would in all probability be his last sacrament, he seemed averse to be separated from the flock whom he had so long fed on the “finest of the wheat;” and again and again, in still more importunate strains, he enforced upon them duties to God and to one another. The congregation maintained a breathless silence, and hung upon his lips, eager to catch every word that fell from their beloved pastor, no doubt sorrowing the more, that they might not again hear the song of mercy chaunted so skilfully and impressively. We regret we cannot present the reader with that evening’s address. He had begun, with his usual fidelity, to write out these

directions, but had not been able to finish all he had intended. In the pulpit, however, he allowed the fulness of his heart to flow out in continuous streams of warm and impassioned exhortation. They who heard him close his services to the church on earth on that occasion, cannot soon forget the fervent appeals which he made to his people on behalf of the cause of missions, and more especially of those recently undertaken by the United Secession Church. It is most interesting to witness this man of God finishing his work in a manner so solemn and consistent; and to contemplate, as the latest effort of his ministerial life, his affectionate advocacy of that cause which aims at the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the hastening of the time when a lost world should be brought back to God. May we not express the hope, that the appeal which was then made to his people will be fully responded to, and that a congregation which has been so long blessed with such a precious ministry, will evince their gratitude to God, by exerting themselves even beyond their ability, to make the name of Jesus known under every clime.

The exertions which he made upon this occasion, produced a painful attack of sickness and violent retching. These continued for days; and as they repeatedly recurred, left him always weaker and weaker. His intended jaunt to England was in consequence prevented. He intimates this in a letter to Mrs H——, which affectingly describes his feelings at this time:—

“ Rose Park, June 19, 1835.

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Though by no means fit for writing, the silence of my friends at Berwick, impels me to take up my pen. It is now three weeks since I returned from Airthrey, very poorly; and, at my request, Mrs Belfrage wrote Mr B—— of my increased indisposition, and that it was out of my power to come to Berwick, and begging him to inform you of this. I have preached none since that time. Our Sacrament was last Sabbath, when I served the first table.

“ My complaint is a disordered state of the stomach and bowels, and great debility. I think, for these eight days, that my strength

is improving, and I am trying to encourage myself in the Lord. O I am desirous to preach again. My mind dwells much on the resignation of David, expressed when he fled from Absalom, and recorded for our imitation in the 15th chapter of 2d Samuel, 25th, and 26th, and 30th verses.

“ If my strength improve, I mean to take short rides in a phaeton, which I have got for the purpose ; and, in another season, I may, through God’s blessing, accomplish my English tour, on which I was much set. I am surrounded by kind friends All that attention, and love, and care can suggest and do, is done for me by Mrs Belfrage ; and He does not leave me comfortless, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Vexing thoughts are hushed by His voice ; dark fears are scattered by His smile, and sinking nature revives in His hand.

“ But I must be done. Remember me very kindly to dear Mr H——, and my sweet young friend.

June 22.

“ I had written the above as well as I could with my tremulous hand, and was about to close and seal it, when the post brought me your most welcome letter. Many many thanks for the deep interest it breathes ; and may its consolation of an enlightened, holy, and affectionate friendship, be sealed on my heart. Such is my confidence in you, that I had not a harsh thought about your silence. I concluded you were from home. My heart joins your thanksgivings to the God of Salvation, for His sweet mercy to you and yours. Mr H——’s kindness I felt very sensibly. What a treasure is the friendship of so estimable a man.

“ I am still getting stronger, though slowly. The cold bath is bracing me. I worshipped with my people yesterday, when Mr F——, from Alloa, preached for me. Our garden is very beautiful just now. I walk frequently in it. Sometimes in a dark mood, I hang my harp on its willows, but the hope you so sensibly and beautifully suggest in your last, I try to express in the words of the prophet Isaiah, xii. 2 ; and the two last verses of the 27th Psalm, often come into my mind, ‘ O blessed be God for all his words of mercy.’ I regret to learn that your health is not so good ; and most sincerely do I wish you all that solace by which pain is softened, and languor is cheered. Mrs Belfrage is weaning her daughter, which takes up her hand. She joins me

in every good wish for you and yours. My sisters are well, and are much gratified by your kind remembrance. Now, my very dear and very kind friend, write me soon. Pray for me and mine, I need not say earnestly : and believe me to be yours faithfully and very affectionately,

HENRY BELFRAGE."

He now, as he states in the preceding letter, sought a renewal of his strength, by riding out frequently in the neighbourhood of his home, and occasionally paying short visits to his friends in the surrounding country. The compiler, at this time, received a visit from his respected friend, and had the gratification of accompanying him to some of the most romantic views on the banks of the Forth. The day was most beautiful, and Dr Belfrage was in something like his usual spirits. When he looked down from the terraces of Culross Abbey and Tulliallan Castle upon the Forth, whose waters glittered in the sun, and toward those lofty mountains that towered in the distance, he could not preserve a silent admiration. He adverted, with the enthusiasm of the poet, hallowed by the piety of the Christian, to the various objects in that truly magnificent landscape. His eye at length settled upon Falkirk, where he had passed the days of his pilgrimage, and from which, and all earthly scenes and services, he was soon to be removed. He gazed in *silence* upon the sphere of his labours ; but, from the earnestness of his look, and the solemnity of his demeanour, it was evident that his spirit was mingling its recollections with scenes and objects more sacred and elevating than the most sublime or beautiful of the works of nature.

The last meeting of Presbytery at which he was present, was held, about this time, at Falkirk. He seemed to be interested in the proceedings, but did not, as was his wont, take any active part. When the arrangements were making for the members of Presbytery continuing to supply his pulpit, he was very much affected, and spoke in feeling terms of the obligations under which their kind services laid him. He dined, as usual, with his brethren, after the Presbytery

rose ; but it was noticed, that he kept perfectly silent, both during and after the time of dinner. This was indeed a sad change in his conduct, which, upon such occasions, had always been most cheerful and lively. But Dr Belfrage now felt, that these, the days of his friendly and innocent associations with his brethren, were hastening fast away, and, as regarded him, were certainly drawing to a close. It was not strange, then, though the serious impression, that he had met with them for the last time, so much solemnized his mind, as to repress every feeling kindred to mirth.

About the end of June, Dr Belfrage left Falkirk, for the purpose of visiting Abbotsford and Melrose Abbey. When he reached Edinburgh, and when stepping out of the phaeton at the house of a relative, the death of the Rev. John Brown Paterson, the parish minister in Falkirk, was announced to him. Mr Paterson had been attending the General Assembly in May, and was seized with typhus fever before he left Edinburgh, where he died, on the 29th of June. By this unexpected intelligence, Dr Belfrage was much afflicted. Indeed, the early and unlooked for removal of this admirable young minister, spread a gloom over all who had the happiness of his acquaintance, and over the Church of Christ in Scotland. From his earliest days, he had given promise of that splendid eminence, to which he attained, as one of the most accomplished of scholars. His classical career was, perhaps, one of the most brilliant that can be pointed at among the annals of the Edinburgh University ; and the compiler may be here allowed to express it as one of the most pleasing of his acadenical associations, that he enjoyed, in these days, somewhat of the friendship of this very talented, and, at the same time, most amiable and unassuming man. It is with satisfaction recorded on these pages, that Mr Paterson, not only on his own account, but on the account of his venerable connexions, commanded the respect and affection of not a few of the ministers and people of the Secession Church.* Dr Belfrage and Mr Paterson had lived together

* Mr Paterson was grandson of the late Mr Brown of Haddington.

upon the most friendly terms; and to the former it was peculiarly gratifying to have for a fellow-labourer in the vineyard, one who added to the highest literary acquirements the piety of the genuine Christian, and the zeal of a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, and who cheerfully co-operated with him in promoting every good and benevolent object. He at this time wrote as follows to Professor Balmer:—

“ Rose Park, July 21, 1835.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was very much gratified by your kind letter, and by the affectionate interest you take in my health and comfort. Your good wishes and prayers, may they be answered in mercy to me, and in blessings to yourself. My strength has been improving for some time past; and during the last eight days, I have had no return of that sore sickness with which I am occasionally afflicted. Often and long have I felt the hand of God loading me with benefits; and I think I have felt its softening affliction, while it humbled me at His feet.

“ My kind brethren are still continuing to supply my pulpit. I am delighted at the prospect of your visit to Falkirk, and your preaching a Sabbath for me. Be so good as write me what Sabbath in September I may expect you. Mrs Belfrage sends her best compliments to Mrs Balmer, and bids me say, she wishes her to accompany you, and she will do every thing in her power to make her visit agreeable. The conveyance by the canal is so quick and pleasant, that I hope you will come out to Falkirk again and again, to relieve you after your arduous labours. In these, I trust, you will find more and more the joy of the Lord, as your strength.

“ The sudden death of Mr Paterson affected me very much. His accomplishments as a scholar were of the first order. His dispositions were singularly gentle and kind; and his piety was so intense and uniform, that it may truly be said, that he walked with God. It was a circumstance to be remarked, that his last new-year’s text was, “ This year thou shalt die ;” and, before he took ill, he was engaged in a course of sermons on the 23d Psalm; his last text was the fourth verse: and I am told it was distinguished by peculiar solemnity and pathos. The beauty of his genius enabled him to exhibit truth in a most engaging form;

and, while his discourses often evinced his skill as a critic, they always glowed with the holy tenderness of sacred fire. I never knew a man more disposed to do justice to the talents and labours of his brethren ; and his generous mind would have scorned at the attempts that have been made to exalt his efforts, as the only instrument in promoting wisdom and piety in our great population.

“ Let me hear from you soon. Mrs Belfrage joins me in kind regards to Mrs Balmer ; and, with best wishes for God’s light and grace, in all your duties, I am, my dear friend, yours very affectionately,

HENRY BELFRAGE.”

In a letter to another friend, he says :—“ Mr Paterson’s death affected me much. His accomplishments as a scholar were very eminent, and so also were the piety and kindness of his heart. His last text was the 4th verse of the 23d Psalm, that portion of this beautiful hymn, so finely descriptive of Faith’s victory in the last hour. Mr Moncreiff is to preach, by way of trial, to morrow. There are two or three others to follow, but I hope *he* will succeed. As the grandson of my venerable friend,* he will be most acceptable to me.”

On hearing of the death of his young friend, Dr Belfrage was anxious to return to Falkirk, without prosecuting his intended jaunt to Melrose, that he might attend the funeral, and improve the dispensation by preaching to his people a funeral discourse. He had selected the text from which he meant to have preached,—“ For what is your life ? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” By the advice, however, of his medical friends, he abandoned this idea, and proceeded to the south. During the whole of this tour, he was rather sad and dejected. The above melancholy event, and his own sinking strength, indisposed his mind from enjoying the romantic scenery on the Tweed. His spirits were indeed somewhat excited, when he found himself in the library of Abbotsford, the scene of

* The late Sir Henry Moncreiff.

those marvellous labours, which for a while held the world under the enchantments of a rare and powerful genius. Amid the ruins of the Abbey of Melrose, too, he forgot for a moment his own decaying frame, and allowed the calm and sombre influence of the remnants of ancient grandeur to arrest and elevate his thoughts. Upon his return to Rose Park, he found himself still weaker than when he left it, and had another severe attack of sickness. Instead of expressing any regret at this, he said to his family, "Be thankful I am not worse. Poor Mr Paterson went away in perfect health, and was brought back a corpse; he was a young man, cut off in the commencement of his ministry; and what a long and uninterrupted course has been assigned to me!—goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." Again he would say, "My mother, who was a pious holy woman, and who marked the ways of Providence, often said to me, 'O Henry! you have been the child of a kind Providence; every thing has prospered with you.' Shall I, then, receive good at the hand of God, and shall I not receive evil?"

From this time his strength gradually decayed. Every attack of sickness left him weaker, and his sufferings were sometimes great. It was now powerfully evident to his brethren and friends, that Dr Belfrage was very soon to depart from the Church below; and it was with no ordinary degree of sorrow, that they beheld him sinking so rapidly under an incurable malady. The state of his health excited a very general interest in Falkirk, and the neighbourhood; and it need not be told, that he had the sympathy and prayers of the pious of every Christian denomination, to whom his works had endeared his name. The setting of his sun was viewed with solemn interest by many an affectionate heart; and when, at length, its light was absorbed in the glories of eternity, memory and gratitude resorted to his tomb, above which they shall long record and celebrate his worth.

The last public duty which Dr Belfrage performed, was a ministerial visitation in the beginning of the month of Au-

gust. This was to the same farm-house, whither he had accompanied his father, when a boy, and of which mention has been made in the first chapter of this Memoir. This was a place which he had much pleasure in visiting. On this occasion he addressed the family, assembled for the last time to hear him, upon the subject of the barren fig-tree. It will perhaps excite some surprise, when it is told, that this address was carefully prepared, and fully written out. Was not Dr Belfrage "faithful to the death?" It was his latest composition, and was delivered by him with great solemnity of manner; throughout the address, the spirituality of his mind was impressively apparent. When he had concluded, a chair was set for him in the garden, where he sat for some time to enjoy the cooling breeze. His friends noticed him taking, as it were, his last and farewell look of objects which, from his earliest years, had been intermingled with his best attachments.

It was about this time, that the writer of this department of the Memoir went, by appointment of Presbytery, to officiate for Dr Belfrage on Sabbath. On reaching Rose Park in the morning, he found him in a very weak state, and much oppressed by sickness. He had dressed, however, intending to go up to the house of God; but his increasing sickness obliged him to remain at home. In the evening, the annual sermon for the Charity School was to be preached in the parish church. Dr Belfrage had uniformly attended upon these occasions, to give public countenance to the institution, and would not permit his friend to return home that night, in order that he might appear in the church as his representative. On leaving Rose Park next morning, Dr Belfrage, accompanied by his little boy, walked with the writer to the gate. He seemed desirous to unburden his heart, but, on observing the approach of Mrs Belfrage, he evidently put a restraint upon himself. As they were parting, he looked down to the lovely child that gambolled at his feet, and, while the tear filled his eye, he said, "If it were God's will, I should like to live till I saw that dear boy a short way on

the road of life ; but I am resigned to his will. Farewell ; and let me have an interest in your prayers."

About a fortnight after this, and just two weeks before his death, he was in the church for the last time. When he returned to the house, at the close of the afternoon's service, he said to the clergyman who had been preaching, " I was much affected by the psalm you sung this afternoon.* Oh ! his mighty works ! his mighty works ! shall I never be permitted again to speak of his mighty works ? " Mr S——, for whom a new place of worship had been recently built, replied, " I hope, Doctor, I shall yet have the pleasure of hearing you preach in my new church." " Ah, no ! " he said, and burst into tears, " I shall never again declare his mighty works." A few days after this, when the writer was sitting with him in his library, after returning from a drive in the country, which he had very much enjoyed, he said, when speaking of the duty of resignation, " I have a pattern in my Lord. The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it ? " On Sabbath, the 6th of September, he was confined to his room. He was so ill, that he could not appear along with the family at the morning worship ; and when they were retiring to engage in this duty, he desired them to leave the doors of his room and of the dining-room open, that he might at least listen to the singing of the psalms. He was heard saying, as they left him, " Oh ! what must it be to be excluded from heaven, where they are engaged in everlasting praises." While the family were singing, his own voice was heard in the distant chamber, feebly attempting to join in their song.

In the midst of all his afflictions, he possessed his soul in patience. He loved the Lamb of God, and resembled him in his meekness and cheerful submission. He did not now put away from himself, as some have done, the comforts of the Gospel, wherewith he had so long been the comforter of others. Prayer and praise were his constant employment ; and, with a mild yet dignified resignation, he awaited the

* Psalm cxlv. 4.

approach of death. He took peculiar delight in the Psalms. He said, "What a treasure are these! I am penetrated with the goodness and condescension of the great God, in permitting a worm of the dust, like me, to praise him." Once, on awakening suddenly from sleep, he repeated, almost in rapture, three or four verses of the 2d Psalm, and seemed to anticipate with joy the triumph of the Redeemer over all his enemies. Upon another occasion, he awoke repeating these words of the prophet, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." And instantly added,—“Mighty to save! mighty to save! O what a security! The Lord is gracious, he is full of compassion; none perish that him trust. What comfort, what support! He is rich in mercy to all that call upon him.” At another time, he awoke saying, “O gracious God, what time soever I awake, I am ever with thee.” He often requested to have read to him Hezekiah’s prayer, and Psalms 42, 61, and 130. He was sometimes also heard repeating the last six verses of the 26th Psalm, which, upon the Sabbath succeeding his ordination, he had given out to be sung after his sermon. When the Psalms were read to him, he occasionally made remarks upon the customs and objects in Palestine, from which David had selected his most beautiful figures.

The next time the compiler saw Dr Belfrage, was upon Wednesday, the 9th of September. He was now confined closely to his bed. On being admitted, he found Dr Belfrage in a slumber. When he was awakened, he exclaimed quickly, and with considerable energy, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” He then stretched out his hand; and, while he grasped that of his visitor, said in a mild and familiar tone, “Is it you, my young friend? I am glad to see you. You are very kind to me. I had a great regard for your father. I was very fond of him, and he was my own and my father’s friend.” He then went on to repeat a great many passages of Scripture, in which quotations from the Psalms abounded.

To a question, whether he enjoyed the full comfort of these delightful texts, he replied, after a short pause, and with a slight hesitation, “ *I am afraid of presumption.*” It was rejoined, that it was the privilege of the saints to “fear not,” but to “go boldly to the throne of grace;” when he immediately, and as if dispelling a momentary cloud, said, “Aye it is so. Wait on the Lord : be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart : wait I say on the Lord.” After a short silence, he looked up and said, “How beautiful is this turn which our version gives to these lines of the psalm,

‘ O when, in kindness unto me,
Wilt thou *be pleased* to come ?’

What condescension in God ! *Be pleased to come ; be pleased to come !* O what condescension !” He talked a great deal about his father, and repeated many passages which he remembered of his father’s sermons. After praying with him, he raised his clasped hands, and said forcibly, “Amen, amen, amen. He shall lead the blind in paths that they have not known. He will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.” Fearing that he was over exerting himself, his visitor attempted now to leave him ; but he still held him firmly by the hand, and would not let him go. “O sir,” he said, “stay a little longer ; I am refreshed by your presence.” Again he repeated several Scriptures, with remarks upon such of them, as seemed to strike him. Upon making another effort to leave him, he said, with a look beaming with benevolence, and a pressure of the hand, which indicated his sincerity in the benediction, “Then God be with you in time and eternity ! O be found in Christ ; be found in him in time ; be found in him at death ; be found in him in eternity. He is a sure foundation, a tried and precious corner-stone ;” then turning round, and looking upon his weeping partner, he exclaimed in the voice of holy affection, “O may God grant that my dear wife and children be found in Christ.” Even after this, he continued to hold the writer by the hand, and would not let him depart. “My brethren,” he said, “are very kind to me. I am af-

feeted with their marked kindness. You must not go away, I wish to speak with you about the congregation, and as to what should be done." This, however, was resisted; and, upon leaving him, he said, "Then farewell. God be with you in time and in eternity, and bless you, and make you a blessing." It was about this time that he heard his infant son's voice in an adjoining room, and desired that he should be brought to him. When the child was lifted into the bed, the dying father placed his hands upon his head, and said, in the language of Jacob, "The God before whom my father did walk, the God who fed me all my life long to this day, the angel who redeemed me from all evil *bless the lad*." When the boy was removed, he added, "Remember and tell John Henry of this; tell him of these prayers, and how earnest I was that he might become early acquainted with his father's God."

The 13th day of September was his last Sabbath on earth. His respected friend Professor Balmer, officiated for him; and the following account of his interview with Dr Belfrage, at this time, was kindly transmitted by him, at the request of the compiler, and will be read with interest:—

"In compliance with your request, I take up my pen to give you a short account of the visit which I paid to the late Dr Belfrage of Falkirk, a few days before his death.

"Perhaps it may be proper to premise, that, in consequence of the places of our residence being so distant from each other, my personal intercourse with him, prior to this visit, had been comparatively limited. I had been acquainted with him, however, for nearly twenty years; had met with him occasionally at the meetings of Synod; and, from the circumstance of several of his publications having been printed in Berwick, I had had with him a good deal of epistolary correspondence. From his letters and his published works, as well as from the testimony of mutual friends, I had long regarded him as a man not only of superior talents and accomplishments, but of ardent and elevated sanctity.

We had repeatedly proposed to assist each other in the services of a sacramental solemnity ; and he had engaged, conditionally, to be with me on an occasion of this nature in the beginning of July last, when he proposed an excursion to England for the benefit of his health. The Supreme Disposer had determined otherwise. The malady which was undermining his constitution, rendered it impracticable for him to undertake the journey.

“ Having been informed, some time in August, that he was incapacitated for his public labours, I wrote him, offering to spend with him the second Sabbath of September, an offer which was most cordially accepted. I had often promised myself no small pleasure and improvement from a visit to him, while he was in health ; but my visit was destined to take place in circumstances, which, though most painful, were still more interesting and improving. Though the accounts which I had received were by no means favourable, I found him much weaker than I had anticipated. It was evident that his connexion with the living world was about to be dissolved ; and, accordingly, the Sabbath which I spent with him, proved his last Sabbath on earth. Other duties prevented me from reaching Falkirk, till the afternoon of Saturday ; and compelled me to leave it at a very early hour on Monday morning. From this cause, and from the state of debility to which Dr Belfrage was reduced, I had less conversation with him than I could have wished, having spent only about five or six hours in all by his bedside. Though nothing very extraordinary occurred, his conversation, and his whole deportment, were in beautiful accordance with his character as a Christian and a minister ; and it was impossible not to feel that the chamber from which this good man takes his departure, is ‘ privileged beyond the ordinary walks of virtuous life.’

“ Immediately after my arrival, I found Mrs Belfrage, and the family, in a state of indescribable sorrow. I was informed that they thought their dear relative was just dying, and that he was not, by any means, aware of it. They

requested me, therefore, to pray with him immediately. I stated, that if he had arranged his temporal affairs, and if his mind was engaged in exercises suited to his circumstances, it was of less consequence that he did not know his end to be so very near; and that, to inform him abruptly, might shock and overpower him. On seeing him, and conversing a little with him, it appeared to me probable that he would survive for a few days. He still retained a considerable degree of bodily strength, and his mental faculties were perfectly entire. He inquired with deep interest, and great particularity, after such of my relatives as were known to him, and conversed respecting the state of the Divinity Hall, and respecting some brethren whom I had lately seen. He stated, that though he felt feeble and exhausted, he was not racked by agonizing pain, and repeatedly expressed his fervent gratitude because his heavenly father had handled him so tenderly.

“ When I proposed to pray with him, his answer indicated that he was not fully aware of his danger. ‘ Yes,’ he said, ‘ we will have family worship here at the usual hour, for I fear I may not be able to go down to the dining-room to-night.’ In a few minutes afterward, and at his own suggestion, I engaged in prayer. From the purport of the prayer, and from remarks which I made to him, he perceived that it was my opinion, not only that he was not to recover, but that he had only a very few days to live. It seemed to me that it was now, for the first time, that he began to abandon entirely the hope of recovery. Even in this most trying situation, his composure was unruffled, and he expressed himself in words to the following effect:—‘ I have many ties to life. When I think of my wife and my children, of my relatives and my congregation, I cannot but feel an anxious wish to recover; but the will of the Lord be done.’

“ His situation naturally reminded him of that of Hezekiah, when that excellent prince was ‘ sick unto death;’ and the prophet came to him with the message, ‘ Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live.’ Accordingly,

our dear friend adverted to various expressions in the prayer and thanksgiving of Hezekiah, on the occasion referred to; employing repeatedly the petition, ‘ O Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me.’

“ Considering his circumstances, it was not surprising that Dr Belfrage felt a strong desire for the prolongation of his life. When I surveyed his interesting family, and his affectionate relatives, his beautiful mansion, and his numerous and flourishing congregation. I could not help thinking that I saw such an apparatus for happiness and usefulness, as few earthly conditions present. It would, therefore, have been unnatural if he had not felt a wish to live; and his willingness to die, if such should be the will of his Lord, evinced an uncommon power of Christian principle.

“ On the Sabbath afternoon he was visibly weaker. Though not racked by pain, he felt a constant uneasiness, and showed that ceaseless tossing to and fro, in quest of a rest not to be found, which is, I believe, a frequent precursor of dissolution. When I proposed to pray with him at this time, he replied, very emphatically, ‘ O yes; pray for me, and pray for my darling wife, and my darling children. Oh for the prayers of the heart! Oh for an interest in the prayers of the great Intercessor.’ In the course of our conversation at this interview, I quoted to him the declaration of Solomon, ‘ A good man shall be satisfied from himself;’ and informed him that I had heard him preach on it many years before. He repeated it once or twice, and added, ‘ I wish it may now be realized in myself.’

“ At both the interviews which I had with Dr Belfrage, numerous passages of Scripture were quoted to him. On many of them he made appropriate and instructive remarks, most of which have now escaped my memory. I recollect, however, that he spoke frequently, and with deep interest, of the ‘ all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ;’ evidently deriving comfort and hope from the contemplation of the dignity of the Saviour’s person, and the perfection of his atonement.

“ At each, also, of the interviews which I had with him,

he reverted to ministers whom he had known in his youth ; expressing his admiration of their character, and quoting their sayings with evident satisfaction. In particular, he referred several times, in this way, to the late Mr Waters of Alloa, whose preaching and conversation seemed to have left an indelible impression on his mind.

“ Next to the piety which appeared so conspicuous in Dr Belfrage’s conversation, and deportment on his deathbed, his gentleness and tenderness to his relatives were evinced, and evinced in a form peculiarly lovely and attractive. His wife, his sisters, and other relatives, were watching around his couch, with untiring assiduity ; and he was ever prompt to express, in strong terms, his gratitude for any attention, or any service, however slight. Indeed, every look, and every word, both on his part and on theirs, betokened manifestly a reciprocal affection the most ardent and tender. From hints which dropped from his relatives, I could perceive that they were looking forward, with a feeling of deep interest, and anxious apprehension, to the Wednesday following, which was the seventh anniversary of his marriage. They seemed to have a presentiment that it would probably prove the day of the dissolution of that union ; and it is remarkable that these melancholy anticipations were exactly realized.

“ It is not necessary to say, that, on taking leave of him, on Sabbath evening, I was deeply affected, feeling persuaded that I should never more converse with him on earth. During the night I slept little ; and ever and anon I heard his voice moaning, from constant uneasiness, or pouring out devout ejaculations to his God and Saviour. But I left Falkirk a little after five o’clock, on Monday morning, and saw his face no more ; and, on the Thursday following, I received the melancholy, though not unexpected, intelligence of his death.

“ I have thus endeavoured to give my recollections of what I witnessed of the deathbed scenes of one who was a distinguished ornament to our religious denomination, and whose writings will form a permanent blessing to the Christian

church at large. It is, I think, scarcely possible to review the labours of his life, or his prospects and conduct at death, and not feel an ardent wish to resemble him in the excellencies of his character, and to participate in the consolations and hopes by which he was sustained and gladdened at the last. ‘Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.’”

The writer saw him again, and for the last time, on Monday forenoon, when he was seemingly near death. Though not suffering acute pain, he was evidently in great uneasiness; and his deep and heavy groans, which were heard in every part of the house, betokened that nature was rapidly sinking. Around his bed stood his afflicted partner and sisters, who never, during his illness, left him for a moment by himself, nor abated their most affectionate attention to his every wish. He could scarcely lift his languid eyes, and kept his arms in constant motion. When he recognized the writer, he took him by the hand, and said, “God is very merciful! God is very merciful!” At this time he seemed averse to speak or be disturbed in any way. As his kind attendants were raising him to an easier position, he cried out, “O, let me alone, that I may die at Jesus’ feet!”—“My Lord and my God! O the Lamb of God! O the love of God!”—were the brief expressions which now frequently escaped his lips, and were indicative of the “fellowship” of his spirit.

On the evening of Tuesday he received a visit from the Rev. Mr Smart, of Stirling, one of his oldest friends, and the venerable father of the Presbytery. Mr Smart was very much affected when he beheld the changed countenance of his friend. Dr Belfrage, though now very low, was quite sensible, and listened with evident satisfaction to the consolatory words of one whom he had long loved and revered. Mr Smart said, that he was sorry to see him in such a weakly state, but trusted that he was still full of hope and full of comfort. “Yes,” replied Dr Belfrage, “you have ex-

pressed it well,—I am full of *hope* and full of comfort.” After some farther conversation, Mr Smart spoke of a sermon which he said he had once heard him preach on the Covenant of Grace, and asked him if he could now lay hold on that covenant as all his salvation and all his desire. Dr Belfrage replied with considerable energy, “O yes, I can;” “All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.”

The hour of this good man’s departure was now near at hand; but though his bodily strength was greatly exhausted, his mental faculties remained clear and unimpaired to the last. Tuesday night was his last, and it was spent in praise. The singing of the psalms had been his solace in every period of life; and death to him was a dismissal to that holy temple where his favourite exercise shall never again be interrupted. Once, during the night, his ear caught the sounds of praise from his worshipping family, and he immediately joined, and sung the first two or three verses of the 103d Psalm. He did this three different times, till he became quite hoarse, and was obliged to desist. On Wednesday morning, the 16th of September, he was still perfectly sensible, though he spoke little. He knew his friends till within an hour of his dissolution, when he fell into a calm and gentle slumber, and about half-past eleven o’clock in the forenoon, without one struggle or groan, his spirit returned to God.

Thus died Dr Belfrage. The reader cannot fail to have noticed this peculiarity in his latter end, that he avoided speaking of death. This he seldom did; and any remarks that were made by him were general, and without reference to himself. This silence, however, must not be attributed to any slavish fear, or doubt about his safety in the waters of Jordan. We are strongly inclined to think, that even till within a few days of his death, he entertained the hope of recovery. He no doubt contemplated the possibility of his illness terminating in death; but he would not renounce the

idea, that the power of his disease might be stayed. He had many strong ties to life; and if he seemed to put the idea of his decease at a distance, it was not because he was not prepared to meet his God, but because of the pain of parting with a family whom he loved so dearly, and whose interesting circumstances cried so affectingly for the prolongation of his life. They will not be surprised at this, who know how intensely the domestic affections were cherished in Dr Belfrage's heart. The truth is, it is difficult to state decidedly what were his exact impressions in reference to this subject; they seemed to vary at different times. On one occasion, observing Mrs Belfrage in tears, he said to one of his sisters, "It grieves me to see Mrs Belfrage so deeply affected." His sister replied, "Henry, you never see me shedding a tear." "No," he rejoined; "and it is a great support to the sufferer that you do not." On the Monday before his death, he again observed some of his friends weeping, and he himself burst into tears. It was asked if any thing was troubling his mind, "Nothing," he replied, "only I am affected at seeing you so sorrowful." On another occasion, he said, "If I thought I were near death, I have many things to say to you;" but, as he never said these things, we are left to judge whether he abstained from doing so in the hope of his recovering, or, as is not unlikely, from his anxiety to spare the feelings of his weeping friends around him, to whom he knew his death would be a severe affliction. Let us believe that he tenderly considered their case, and communed with death in his own spirit. He was a man who had *died daily*, and could meet the tyrant with the triumphant challenge of the apostle. The prospect of death, no doubt, deeply solemnized his mind, but it never for a moment unfounded his confidence in the rock of his salvation. If no triumphant bursts of assurance irradiated the closing scenes of his life, neither were they disturbed by perplexing thoughts: in him faith never trembled, and hope had her eyes fixed upon heaven to the last. His end was peace.

On the Sabbath after his death, his intimate and re-

spected friend, the Rev. James Hay, of Kinross, who had previously arranged to spend that day with him at Falkirk, preached to the now bereaved and mourning congregation. At the close of his sermon, in the afternoon, he thus briefly, though in a most feeling and beautiful manner, sketched the character of their deceased pastor:—

“It is by a very singular providence, my dear brethren, that I appear before you on this very solemn and mournful occasion. Nothing was more unlooked for on my part. About three weeks ago, I received a letter from your most worthy minister, requesting me to preach for him on this Sabbath, and stating, at the same time, that of late he was gaining strength, and hoped, in a short time, to resume a part of his public labours. When making arrangements for this journey, and while anticipating a pleasing and profitable interview with a very dear and long tried confidential friend, I received, on the evening before I left home, the mournful intimation that he was no more. And, oh! my friends, how necessary are such admonitions to impress more deeply on our hearts, the solemn warning, ‘In such a day, and such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.’

“I mention these things, to claim your indulgence for the hurried, and very feeble and imperfect sketch, of a few of the leading traits of our departed friend, so highly and justly dear to us all. Truly a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel. His death is a great and irreparable loss to his surviving relations and friends; to his kind and affectionate congregation; but, above all, to his afflicted and bereaved widow, and his infant children. I trust, that He who is the husband of the widow, and the father of the fatherless, will be their God and portion,—their counsellor in life, and their hope in death. In regard to himself, there can be no doubt, that death has been great and unspeakable gain. After bearing the burden and heat of the day, he hastened into his heavenly and everlasting rest. As a diligent and eminently useful minister of Christ, he has fought

a good fight, kept the faith, and finished his course, and has received the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give in that day to all who love his appearing. The great head of the Church was pleased to confer on him gifts and talents of a very high order for ministerial usefulness; and under the happy superintendence of his venerable father, these were brought into vigorous exercise in very early life; and in every subsequent period of his ministry he continued to approve himself a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, bringing forth out of his treasury things both new and old. He had a well stored library of select books, for illustrating the Holy Scriptures. There he spent much, alas! perhaps, too much, of his time; so that his naturally robust and vigorous constitution, seems to have been prematurely broken down by close application and incessant study. His pulpit labours bore ample testimony that he did not serve his beloved master with what had cost him nothing. His discourses were particularly distinguished by judicious arrangement, and by a skilful exhibition of divine truth, and were interspersed with many striking sentiments and peculiarly happy illustrations, which would not have presented themselves to an ordinary mind. He was not one of those who regard more the drapery and ornament of a sermon, than its edifying tendency. His style was neat, elegant, and scriptural, and distinguished at the same time by plainness and simplicity; so that his hearers were never allowed for a moment to forget, that his great object in preaching was to awaken the secure, to instruct the ignorant, to build up the believer in his most holy faith, and to administer peace and hope to the wounded and broken spirit. Indeed, in every part of his ministration, he might be well designated—a son of consolation. In prayer, there was an unction, a pathos, an enlargement of sentiment, and an appropriate richness of scriptural expression, which elevated the worshippers to holy intercourse with God; at the same time breathing forth the tenderness, the fervour, and deep solicitude of his heart, to the hearer of prayer, for

every covenant and purchased blessing. A principle of vital religion was deeply interwoven with the constitution of his mind, and diffused its sacred influence through the whole tenor of his life. The eternal welfare of his people was the grand object which ever lay nearest his heart; and by day and by night he watched for your souls, as one who must give an account. That account has now been given; and no one who knew him will doubt for a moment, that he has received the gracious approbation of his master—‘Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ As a friend, he was steady, affectionate, forbearing; of this I can bear ample personal testimony, for a period of betwixt forty and fifty years. We were cotemporaries at the University, at the Divinity Hall, and were ordained in the same year; and during all this long period, our confidential intimacy was never broken nor interrupted for a single day. He was held in high estimation by his friends, and by his brethren in the ministry of every denomination; and, indeed, by all who knew him, for his instructive and fascinating conversation, and particularly for the suavity of his disposition, the kindliness of his heart, accompanied with what might be called, in a special manner, ‘the gentleness of Christ;’ whilst the soundness of his judgement could be relied on in every case of difficulty, and his disposition to oblige wherever he had it in his power to confer a favour. Till within these few months, when his health and strength no longer permitted, I need not tell you, my brethren, how abundant he was in labours: besides his pulpit discourses, which were always carefully prepared, making it matter of conscience to catechise and visit, from house to house, this large congregation, every year, which few ministers would have attempted, and perhaps not another of such studious habits could have been able to accomplish. Besides all this labour, he was ready, at every call, to visit the house of mourning, or to stand by the bed of sickness, to pour the balm of consolation into the troubled heart, or to raise the drooping hopes of the dying to Him who is the resurrection

and the life. His heart was indeed so deeply engaged in preaching the everlasting Gospel, and promoting the eternal interests of precious and immortal souls, that I am persuaded he would have deemed it one of the heaviest afflictions, if his life had been prolonged without the capability of further usefulness to the people of his charge. What unspeakable consolation should it afford to us who survive him, that those precious doctrines which he so faithfully and impressively preached to others, were the life and support of his own soul in the day of trouble and sickness, and in the hour of death. The imputed righteousness of the Saviour, he solemnly and repeatedly declared, was the only foundation on which he rested for eternity; and that all his hope was centered, in being found in him, in life, in death, and at the judgement. When heart and strength failed, and life was fast sinking, the only topic which roused his dying energies, was in speaking of the Saviour of sinners, the Lamb of God, and the infinite extent of redeeming love. Though willing, yea, desirous to live, had it been the will of God, chiefly, I am persuaded, for the sake of his dear infant children, and of further usefulness in the Church, he was fully prepared to die. During his protracted illness, his mind was calmly and steadfastly looking to his departure. After a very severe and most painful struggle with the disease, for a few days, he laid down his head upon his pillow, and calmly and peacefully, without a spasm or a groan, breathed forth his spirit into the bosom of his Saviour and his God. 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.'

“ My dear brethren, the voice of him who so often addressed you from this pulpit, in the language of affection and kindness, you shall hear no more; but remember, though dead, he yet speaketh, by his precious and invaluable writings, which he has left as a rich legacy to the church of Christ, by which his memory will be embalmed through successive generations. This legacy you should view as particularly left to you,—to the young among you, and to the aged, to the rich and to the poor, to the prosperous and to

the afflicted, to husbands and wives, to masters and servants, to parents and children, to those who are in sound health, and to those who, with a debilitated frame and a throbbing heart, are looking to death and eternity. Many churches have envied your distinguished privileges, in being long blessed with the labours of such a pious and eminently gifted minister; and the best evidence you can give of the high place he occupied in your regard, is by making it manifest, that you have profited by his instructions, and that to your souls his words have been spirit and life. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, he had his conversation among you; and what remaineth, but that you labour through grace to be followers of him, even as he also followed Christ. You have been accustomed to meet with your minister in this place, from Sabbath to Sabbath; and oh! what a solemn reflection, that you must all again meet with him in a larger and more solemn assembly, where the Supreme Judge will require a particular account from every individual, what improvement you have made of your high and precious privileges, and whether the Gospel message has been to your soul a savour of life unto life. The God of mercy and salvation forbid, that, in that solemn and momentous day, it should be announced regarding a single individual present, that this Gospel has been to you a savour of death unto death. The Lord's voice has been recently crying in loud and impressive language to this town and neighbourhood, by removing, within a very short time, two ministers, eminently distinguished for their talents and faithfulness, and extensive sphere of usefulness in the Church. What a powerful incitement to stir up each other to frequent and fervent prayer to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who never dies, to send forth other labourers into his vineyard, that, while zealous and successful ministers are not suffered to continue by reason of death, he would remember his gracious promise, 'Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' And now, my dear brethren, amidst all the vicissitudes of this mortal and chequered life, I commend you to Him who is able to keep you from fall-

ing, and to present you before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

The funeral took place on Wednesday, the 23d of September. The coffin was carried by the members of the session of the deceased, and was immediately followed by the ministers of the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk; other clergymen of the town of Falkirk and the neighbourhood, of every denomination; the member of Parliament for the county; many of the heritors in the parish; the magistrates of Falkirk; the members of the congregation, and a multitude of other mourners from various parts of the country, who came to testify their respect for his memory. The body was interred in the cemetery adjacent to Dr Belfrage's place of worship, not far distant from the spot where, in the morning of his life, he had begun to study how to live and how to die. The road from Rose Park to the place of interment was lined on either side by numerous spectators, and not a few of the aged and infirm, and apparently poor of the earth, shed the tear of sorrow and of grateful remembrance, as the mortal remains were borne past of one whose sympathy had cheered them in affliction, and whose charity had blessed them in a time of need.

On the Sabbath after the interment, the Rev. Mr Harper of Leith preached two funeral sermons; in the forenoon, from the parable of the "talents," in the Gospel according to Matthew; and in the afternoon, from the 10th verse of the 16th Psalm, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." This mournful dispensation of Providence was most suitably and impressively improved in both discourses, and the character which was given of the late pastor of the congregation, was alike honouring to the memory of the deceased, and to the taste and judgement of the preacher.*

* The compiler regrets having failed to obtain from Mr Harper the character drawn of Dr Belfrage. It had fallen aside, and could not be recovered.

Soon after this, the congregation, greatly to their credit, unanimously resolved to erect a monument over the grave of their minister. This resolution has not yet been carried into effect; but an elegant stone pillar is preparing, which is to mark the resting-place of him who had, during a long life of honourable and laborious exertion, fed his own flock with “the bread that cometh down from heaven,” and ministered also to the whole of the “faithful in Christ Jesus,” by his talented and instructive publications. This monument is to bear the following concise and judicious inscription, which has been kindly drawn up for this purpose, by the venerable Father of the Presbytery:—

HERE ARE INTERRED THE REMAINS

OF THE

REV. HENRY BELFRAGE, D.D.

BORN MARCH 24, 1774; ORDAINED JUNE 18, 1794;

DIED SEPTEMBER 16, 1835.

A

DEBTOR TO GRACE FOR MANY EXALTED GIFTS,

HE “LIVED UNTO GOD.”

IN THE PRIVATE RELATIONS OF LIFE

HE EXEMPLIFIED AND ADORNED,

WHILE BY HIS PUBLIC LABOURS

HE PROMOTED,

THE CAUSE AND INTEREST OF HIS REDEEMER.

DISPOSITIONS SINGULARLY AMIABLE

ENDEARED HIM TO HIS FRIENDS.

THE WISDOM AND FAME OF HIS WRITINGS

COMMENDED HIM TO ALL.

HIS LIFE

WAS ONE OF EXEMPLARY DILIGENCE AND ENVIABLE HONOUR,

AND HIS DEATH

WAS PEACEFUL AND HAPPY.

AN ESSAY
ON THE
CHARACTER OF DR BELFRAGE
AS AN AUTHOR.

THE object of the following Essay, is to present a brief sketch of the character of Dr Belfrage as an author. In the preceding Memoir, an account, it is presumed, has been given of each of his publications ; and, therefore, any thing more than a few supplementary remarks on the general characteristics of his writings, would now be superfluous. Any thing more is, in present circumstances, utterly impracticable. The greater part of the volume, to which this Essay is intended as an appendage, is already printed ; and it would be manifestly unreasonable to delay the publication for the sake of any additional observations.

It is in compliance with the wishes of several of Dr Belfrage's nearest relatives, as well as with the cordial consent of his biographers, that I undertake the present task. And, had the task been undertaken in circumstances more propitious, and had I felt myself competent to it, I would have attempted it with much alacrity,—impelled by the cordial veneration which I cherished for the excellent person, whose talents and writings are to be the subject of remark, and by a firm persuasion, that his character as an author, like his character as a man and a minister, has little to lose, and much to gain, by an impartial delineation.

Of a very large class of writers on religion, it may be affirmed, that their works possess so little individuality, and that they are so little above or below mediocrity, that it is impossible to characterize them. To those who are at all acquainted with the publications of Dr Belfrage, it is unnecessary to say, that to this class of writers he does not belong. With one slight modification, it may be asserted, that his productions possess “that uniformity of thought and design, which,” as Bishop Butler observes, “will always be found in the writings of the same person, when he writes with simplicity and in earnest.” Not only so: they are marked by such peculiarities, both of conception and diction, as impart to them not merely a distinct character, but something of mannerism. The leading qualities of his mind and heart are imprinted deeply on all his writings; and there is scarcely a page in them, which is not stamped unequivocally with “the image and superscription” of the author. The following seem to me to be among their most important, if not their most prominent, characteristics.

First, They are eminently practical. Of his published works, a considerable portion consists of sermons, or of essays, and short treatises, which had been previously delivered from the pulpit, in the form of sermons. Not only these, but all his publications without exception, were intended not for a select or exclusive class, but for all classes of readers; and hence perhaps it is, that so large a proportion of them is allotted to practical subjects. With the immense importance of such subjects he seems to have been deeply impressed; and it was probably his conviction (a conviction, doubtless, well founded), that, by many evangelical preachers, sufficient prominence is not given to such subjects, in their ordinary ministrations. For such subjects, too, he seems to have had a strong predilection; and in the discussion of them he is peculiarly happy,—treating them usually with great skill and judgement, and with great fidelity, earnestness, and affection.

The eminently practical character of his writings appears

not less conspicuously in his discussion of other topics. That his sentiments were decidedly and unequivocally evangelical, it is unnecessary to remark. In the course of his multitudinous productions, he has occasion to state and illustrate almost all the doctrines of revealed religion ; but it was evidently his inflexible resolution to “glory only in the cross of Christ,” and to “know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” Accordingly, he brings forward prominently the grand peculiarities of the Gospel, and dwells most frequently and most largely on its vital and central truths. In doing this, he does, of course, nothing more than is done by other evangelical writers. There are many writers and preachers, however, who exhibit distinctly the leading doctrines of Christianity ; but, from coldness of temperament, or from speculative and argumentative habits, or from some other cause, they exhibit these doctrines chiefly as objects of indolent assent, or of frigid speculation. There are others who, if not “unskilful in the word of righteousness,” do not “rightly divide it ;” who appear to far greater advantage when illustrating or defending the truths of religion, than when pointing out their practical tendency, or when enforcing duty ; and who seem indeed to regard the latter as an object of very subordinate importance. It was not thus with Dr Belfrage. To assert that his writings tend powerfully to nurse a spirit the very reverse of self-confidence and legality, and that they do not, either by what they contain, or what they omit, give the slightest encouragement to antinomian indolence and licentiousness, is no small praise ; but it is not to do them justice. The conviction, that the Gospel is pre-eminently and emphatically “the doctrine according to godliness,” and that “the word of truth” is also “the word of righteousness,” had taken an inflexible hold of his mind. While he had a singularly vivid perception of the infinite grandeur and importance of Christian truth, he possessed also an extraordinary degree of sensibility to the moral influences with which that truth is impregnated. These convictions and impressions are transfused largely into all his writings. His state-

ments of duty are "baptized into Christ," being suffused and perfumed with evangelical doctrine; and his statements of doctrine are blended by a still more copious admixture of practical remarks and exhortations. It is this which constitutes one of the most striking peculiarities in his mode of managing doctrinal subjects. Amply as he often dilates on the grand and essential verities of Christianity, he never exhibits them in a naked and insulated form, or as objects of mere intellectual contemplation. On the contrary, he exhibits them invariably in their mutual relations and dependencies, and in combination with their moral and practical bearings and tendencies; and, of course, in that aspect best adapted to interest the feelings, to impress the conscience, and to influence the conduct. Not only so,—but it is his frequent custom to pause at the successive stages of a doctrinal discussion, for the purpose of indicating briefly, or inculcating formally, some of the more important, but less obvious, of the practical lessons deducible from the subject.

The leading facts, and the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, are so obviously fraught with practical lessons, that to discuss them in a practical manner may be thought an easy achievement. But Dr Belfrage's practical instructions are characterized by their quality as well as their quantity, by their value as well as their multiplicity. Nor is it only the grand and vital truths of religion that are treated by him in a way eminently conducive to "the use of edifying;" he is a guide so instructive and pleasing, that there is scarcely a topic in the whole territory of Christian theology, which, if surveyed under his direction, does not present the aspect of a scene adorned with the "beauties of holiness," of a field abounding with "the fruits of righteousness." So prompt is his discernment of the moral tendency of religious truth, and so admirable his talent for the enforcement of duty, that even those subjects which do not seem to have a close affinity to matters of practice, and those which seem comparatively sterile and uninviting, become, in his hands, subser-

vient to excitement or comfort, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." In proof of this, reference might be made to his "Exposition of the Shorter Catechism," to his "Sacramental Addresses," and to his writings in the department of religious biography.

That his "Exposition of the Shorter Catechism" evinces greater talents for expanding, and embellishing, and applying admitted truths, than for disentangling what is intricate, or proving what is doubtful, is readily allowed. His object was to produce a book adapted for popular instruction; and in this he has been signally successful. His expository remarks are always judicious and pertinent, often original and ingenious; but the most remarkable feature of the performance consists in the copiousness and excellence of the moral and practical lessons incorporated with the exposition of didactic points, and pre-eminently with those which are abstruse and difficult. Variety, as well as value, is thus imparted to the work; and it is rendered more attractive and interesting, as well as more instructive and edifying.

His "Sacramental Addresses" belong to a species of composition, which is extremely difficult, and in which few have excelled. That they are disfigured by slight blemishes, cannot be denied; but they have also many beauties, and beauties apparently incompatible. Limited as seems the range of topics suited to such addresses, those of Dr Belfrage are characterized by extraordinary variety and richness; and, what was hardly to be expected in combination with these qualities, by great appropriateness. If the expressions may be allowed, they are redolent with love and salvation; they breathe the atmosphere of the Redeemer's atoning "sufferings, and of the glory that followed;" and are tinged at once with the "blood of his cross," and the radiance of heaven. One of their chief excellencies, however, perhaps their highest excellence, is one of a very different kind. They, too, like all his writings, are copiously blended with invaluable practical hints and injunctions. From facts and doctrines the most sublime and astonishing, or from de-

vout aspirations the most fervent and elevated, he descends, by a natural and easy transition, to the scenes and occurrences of ordinary life, and to the most familiar and humble duties,—thus rendering faith and feeling the nurses of holiness.

In proof of the practical character of his writings, reference was made also to his contributions to the stock of our religious biography. Not only has he sprinkled his narrative with many valuable reflections, but he has infused into the whole current of it a practical tinge. It would be too much to assert, that in this portion of his works he never indulges to excess his propensity to moralize; but it may be asserted with confidence, that his moral and devotional reflections are seldom trite or trivial, and that many of them possess what has been pronounced the most characteristic constituent of good writing, being “natural but not obvious.”

To assert of the religious writings of any author, that they are eminently practical, is to specify only a single quality, and to convey nothing more than a general idea of the quality specified. It is but proper, therefore, to add a few remarks, for the purpose of describing more precisely this quality as exemplified in the writings of Dr Belfrage. With this view, it may be observed, that that knowledge of human nature, or of mankind, of which every minister ought to possess a competent portion, may be viewed as comprehending two great departments. There is a knowledge of human nature viewed in the abstract,—a knowledge which consists chiefly in an accurate acquaintance with those faculties, and affections, and feelings, which are common to all men. And there is a knowledge of human nature, as moulded and modified by circumstances, as exhibited, not in every individual, but in particular persons or classes. The former is obtained chiefly by reflection on the phenomena of our own consciousness, or on the operations of our own minds, and is usually possessed in the largest measure by the metaphysician and the moral philosopher. The latter is the result of an attentive observation of the conduct of others;

and those are most likely to excel in it, who, to an instinctive quickness of discernment, add some experience in the business of the world. These two species of knowledge are intimately connected; nor is it possible to possess a large portion of the one, without possessing also a considerable quantity of the other. Still there is a distinction between them. If I mistake not, it is chiefly for the latter species of knowledge that the writings of Dr Belfrage are characterized. In other words, they are distinguished for the knowledge, not so much of human nature, as of human character and human life; that knowledge which is to be obtained, not by solitary reflection, but by the use of the bodily senses as well as of the mental faculties, by a careful and vigilant observation of the circumstances and occupations, the manners and opinions, the spirit and temper of men. Singularly practical as are his sermons, and almost all his productions, it may be questioned whether they are entitled to the epithets experimental and searching. He does not excel, like Richard Baxter, at least he does not pre-eminently excel, in developing the arcana of Christian experience, or in dealing with the conscience of the sinner; in detecting the sophistries of self-deception, or in unravelling the intricacies of human thought and feeling, and in “making manifest the counsels and intents of the heart.” Not that he is deficient in these particulars; but that with respect to them he does not evince the same admirable skill which he displays in other matters. It is in applying religious truth to the more visible and palpable, rather than to the more subtle and secret operations of the mind, and in bringing it to bear on matters of outward conduct, that he appears to greatest advantage. But if he had not traced the most intricate windings, and fathomed the lowest depths of the soul of man, he had penetrated far below the surface. If he had not analyzed the principles of human nature with the accuracy of a metaphysician, he had looked on human life and human character with the eye of a Christian divine and a Christian moralist. His knowledge of mankind was not borrowed from books;

it was the result of careful observation. Hence it is, that his moral reflections and advices, if not characterized by extraordinary depth, are seldom *jejune* or common-place, and are generally distinguished by shrewdness and acuteness, and by freshness and raciness. He had surveyed attentively "the ways of men," the condition and conduct of the various classes with whom his professional employments led him to hold intercourse; and with the view of promoting their spiritual improvement and comfort, he had marked their principal temptations and trials, and their prevailing sins and prejudices. As he knew the disease, so he knew the remedy,—for he possessed an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the discoveries of the Gospel and the requirements of the law; and these discoveries and requirements he applies to the sentiments and conduct of men, with all the wisdom and tenderness of a skilful and affectionate physician.

It is proper to remark further, that while the most solemn and the most elevated themes of religion are brought by our author into immediate contiguity with the circumstances and occupations of all classes, and even with the homely scenes and the humble duties of ordinary life, these themes are yet so exhibited as to lose nothing of their sanctity and grandeur. Under his management, religion, instead of being secularized or debased, by being brought into contact with worldly occurrences and employments, not only preserves unsullied its own divine character, but dignifies and hallows whatever it touches, imparting to every earthly object a celestial hue. Like its Divine Author, Christianity is thus displayed as resembling the light of heaven, which mingles with objects and scenes the most polluted and revolting, but which retains uncontaminated its native purity and radiance, and tinges every thing on which it shines with its own splendour and beauty.

I have dwelt much longer than I intended, on the practical character of Dr Belfrage's writings. It was proper, however, to dwell at some length on this quality, as it con-

stitutes one of their most obvious and important properties, and contributes so largely to their useful tendency.

A *second* quality, intimately allied to the preceding, is that *spirit of ardent and elevated devotion* by which they are pervaded. His works may be pronounced at once eminently practical, and eminently devotional; employing the former epithet to designate the sentiments and duties which refer to our fellow-creatures; and the latter, to describe the affections and emotions which ought to be cherished toward God.

In religion, as in other matters, men have often “put asunder the things which God had joined together.” By many writers morality has been disjoined from faith; and the precepts of Christianity have been unnaturally divorced from its doctrines. Duty has been explained and enforced, sometimes without any recognition at all, and sometimes without any explicit recognition, of those wonderful facts and discoveries which supply the appropriate motives of duty. This enormous error vitiates the larger proportion of the discourses which emanated from the clergy of both of our established churches during the last century; of which discourses we have a fair and not unfavourable sample in the sermons of Dr Blair, once so highly admired, and now consigned to perhaps unmerited neglect. The writers and preachers in question are usually regarded as holding the Arminian system of theology; but both their doctrinal and their practical instructions are accommodated to a system far more defective and unscriptural, and might be more naturally engrafted on the grossest Pelagianism. They admit the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of the Son of God; but if they do not deny, they do not assert, the radical depravity of human nature, the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification by faith to the exclusion of works, and the inability of man to perform any duty aright without Divine aid. Their references to the ineffable compassion of the Redeemer, to his transcendent loveliness, to our immeasurable obligations to him, and to his consequent claims on our affection.

are frigid and unfrequent. A field so narrow and sterile can not be expected to produce in much abundance the fruits of devotion. Accordingly, it is not the tendency of the writings alluded to, to inspire sentiments of profound sorrow for sin, of ardent gratitude to God, and love to Christ, of humble yet confident reliance on the great sacrifice, or of eager longing after spiritual and heavenly enjoyments.

While Dr Belfrage differs from some evangelical preachers, and resembles the authors just mentioned, in the frequency and particularity with which he delineates and enforces moral virtues and duties ; in other respects, his writings present not a counterpart, but a contrast to theirs. His doctrinal creed was essentially different ; and, of course, he differs from them in respect of the arguments and considerations by which he enforces duty ; for instead of severing the precepts of the law from the doctrines and promises of the Gospel, he enriches his morality by a copious unction of evangelical sentiment. He differs from them further, in that spirit of ardent and elevated devotion which glows in all his writings. In this particular he differs even from many evangelical authors ; and if he does not excel them all, there are few indeed who excel him. He never forgets, and he never allows his readers to forget, that the first of all the commandments requires supreme love to God ; and that the second, which is like the first, requires sincere love to men. He never forgets, and he never allows his readers to forget, that the belief of the truth proves itself to be real only by exerting a purifying and consoling influence ; that faith is the appointed instrument of sanctification as well as of justification ; and that sanctification comprehends right sentiments and affections toward our Creator and our Redeemer, as well as toward our fellow-creatures. The expression of the psalmist, “ O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together ;” or that of the apostle, “ This also we wish even your perfection ;” would form an appropriate motto to almost all his writings. He never contemplates his subject merely in itself, or apart from its bearings on his readers ;

he is ever on the alert to improve it, as the means of kindling in them the flame of piety; and there is not a single doctrine of revelation, which, as exhibited by him, does not emit in abundance both devotional and practical influences. He evidently regarded the devotional and poetical parts of Scripture with peculiar delight and admiration; he had familiarized himself with them by a frequent perusal; and while he saw their beauty, he felt their power. Accordingly, in giving utterance to the breathings of an ardent piety, and in attempting to awaken in his readers spiritual aspirations and desires, he appears manifestly to speak from the overflowings of his own soul. “When he speaks of the things touching the king, his tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” “Out of the good treasure of his heart he bringeth forth good things.”

The writings of Dr Belfrage are distinguished not only for the abundance, but the value of the devotional sentiments, as well as of the practical lessons, with which they are enriched. While they are elevated immeasurably above the freezing coldness of philosophical abstraction, they do not rise into the intemperate fervours of a delusive mysticism. The piety which pervades them is ardent, but enlightened; elevated, but pure; rational and constant; preserving a happy medium between the presumption of enthusiasm and the terrors of superstition.

In further illustration of this particular, it may be remarked, that devotional sentiments and affections may be arranged into two great divisions, according to the aspect in which the Divine character and perfections are contemplated. They arise either from a view of the more majestic and awful attributes of Deity, his omniscience, his power, and his purity; and may be comprehended under the general name of reverence or fear: or they arise from a view of his milder and more amiable attributes, his goodness, his mercy, and grace; and consist of love and the kindred affections, trust, hope, and joy. Of our religious writers, some, as Jonathan Edwards for example, excel chiefly in depicting

and exciting the former sentiments ; others, like Doddridge, excel in producing and painting the latter. While an author would be chargeable with a grievous defect, if his writings tended to call up exclusively the one class of these emotions, it ought not to be imputed to him as a fault that he evinces more skill in awakening the one class than in arousing the other. The two are not incompatible ; for while “ God is great, and greatly to be feared,” he is also good, “ and much to be loved.” It is, however, a great and a rare felicity to excel in exciting and depicting both these emotions, or kinds of emotion. In this attempt he is most likely to succeed, who allots a proper share of attention to each class of the Divine attributes ; who exhibits the greatness of God in combination with his goodness, and his mercy in combination with his majesty and his purity ; for it is when encircled by his other attributes, and particularly by his moral perfections, that his mercy emits its brightest and its most attractive lustre.

These remarks naturally suggest the questions, How far has Dr Belfrage been successful in representing both these classes of devout affections ? And if his writings have a more powerful tendency to produce the one class than the other, which of the two are they best fitted to produce ? To these questions it may be answered, without hesitation, that his writings are admirably calculated to excite both ; but that they tend most powerfully to excite and foster love and the kindred feelings. They present many striking and affecting views of the majesty, the power, and the purity of God ; and are therefore well fitted to impress the saint with godly fear, and the sinner with a salutary terror ; but it is on the Divine benevolence and kindness that the author dwells most frequently, and with greatest satisfaction. It was an employment more congenial to his own feelings, to set forth “ the compassions,” than to muster the “ terrors of the Lord ;” to unfurl the banners of mercy, than to fulminate the thunders of justice ; to portray the joys of heaven, than to paint the horrors of hell. The love of God, the sufferings and the sacrifice of Christ, the riches of the Saviour’s grace, the tender-

ness of his sympathy, the blessings of his redemption, the qualities of his character, as manifested in the incidents of his history ; the offices and operations of “ the good Spirit,”—these are the themes on which, in his doctrinal discourses, he expatiates with greatest complacency,—themes of which he never tires. And, accordingly, the predominant sentiments and affections awakened and fostered by his writings, are of a pleasing and soothing kind ;—admiration, gratitude, love, hope, confidence, delight, joy, and others of a kindred character.

A *third* property, which distinguishes the writings of Dr Belfrage, is *sensibility* or *tenderness*.

If I am not misinformed, his natural dispositions were singularly gentle, affectionate, and amiable ; and there can be no doubt that they had been sweetened and improved, in no ordinary degree, by the sanctifying influence of religion. There is also more than a little in his writings to impress the idea, that not only was his soul “ cast in one of nature’s finer moulds,” but that smooth and agreeable as seemed the tenor of his life, he was not a stranger to those severe sorrows, the tendency of which to soften the heart is so powerful and obvious, as to be almost proverbial. I am not aware that this was actually the case, and that he could have said with the poet :—“ *Haud ignarus mali, miseris succurere disco.*” “ What private griefs he had I know not ;” but judging merely from his writings, it seems not improbable that “ he had seen affliction ;” that “ the waves and the billows” of spiritual distress “ had passed over him ;” and that what has been strikingly said of an eminent English minister was not inapplicable to him,—“ he had done business in the mighty waters.” One thing admits of no reasonable doubt, that “ if he had not felt sorrow, sorrow was to him a sacred thing ;” that sensibility formed a characteristic element in his mental constitution ; and in the discussion of every topic this sensibility is conspicuously apparent.

That his moral perceptions were remarkably quick and

accurate, has already been hinted, and must be manifest to all who read his writings with any degree of attention. Of him it might truly be affirmed, that “ he had his senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Not only was he unusually prompt in distinguishing between right and wrong, between duty and sin ; he had also an unusually vivid perception of the excellence and beauty of the former, and of the criminality and turpitude of the latter ; a perception analogous to that delicate sense of honour in which the men of the world pride themselves, and which some of them actually possess. His sensitiveness with respect to moral objects and qualities, implied much more than an intellectual apprehension,—a decision of the judgement ; it included, also, an emotion of the heart ; for what he saw clearly, he felt deeply and powerfully.

The effect of this spiritual sensibility in his writings, is most evident and most happy. Holiness appeared to him an object far more glorious and lovely, than it appears to the generality even of Christian instructors ; sin appeared to him proportionally detestable and revolting ; and the aspect in which he himself contemplated these objects, is that in which he exhibits them to others. Offences which are often regarded as comparatively slight, assume the shades of a dark and shocking malignity, when depicted by his hand ; duties and virtues which have often been described, and which have often been contemplated with little interest, are invested, in his pages, with charms and attractions, which they have seldom presented before. Nor would it be easy to point to many authors, whose works are better adapted to excite a dread and a detestation of whatever is evil ; and to kindle the admiration and the love of “ whatsoever things are true, or honest, or just, or pure, or lovely, or of good report.”

It might have been remarked, that, in the discussion of almost every topic in religion, as well as of matters of duty, Dr Belfrage writes with a tone of gravity, earnestness, and affection, indicating plainly how clearly he discerned, and

how deeply he felt, its moral grandeur, and its ineffable importance. But, in specifying sensibility as a marked element in his character as an author, I intended to refer chiefly to the sympathy which he evinces for the miseries and sorrows of mankind. Not only are his writings pervaded by a spirit of uniform benevolence and kindness; his benevolence is distinguished by exquisite tenderness and delicacy. With all the forms of human wretchedness, from the coarse and palpable evils of poverty and bodily disease to the anxieties and fears of spiritual despondency, he is prompt to sympathize. Though he does not refuse "to rejoice with them that rejoice," he is more inclined to the more needful office of cautioning and warning them; but he is never tardy or reluctant to "weep with them that weep." While he is often inculcating the duty of supplying the wants of the indigent, and of alleviating other temporal evils, he is often also expressing his "compassion for the ignorant, and them that are out of the way," or administering the balm of religious comfort to those who are grieved in spirit, or broken in heart. It is in his treatment of mental sorrows, and spiritual maladies, that it is most interesting to trace the operations of his sympathy. Being "affectionately desirous" of those whom he addresses, "he seems willing to impart unto them, not the Gospel of God only, but his own soul also." "He exhorts, and comforts, and charges every one, as a father doth his children." Perhaps no preacher was ever less chargeable with that "hard and unfeeling manner of denouncing the threatenings of the word of God," which has been justly reprobated as "barbarous and inhuman." He attempts more frequently to allure than to alarm the careless and the impenitent. He relies more on considerations of tenderness, than on arguments of terror; and when he does proclaim the denunciations of the law, it is always with suitable solemnity, pathos, and tenderness. That sensibility which imparts so much force to his expostulations with the impenitent, is still more manifest in the exhortations and comforts which he addresses to believers. Almost all his

writings are remarkably consolatory ; and, though many authors might be named, who are better fitted to interest and inform the inquisitive and the intelligent ; and some, who are more likely to convince and arouse the hardened, few could be mentioned who are better adapted to soothe, and cheer, and strengthen the sorrowful, the desponding, and the feeble. He never forgets that he was a messenger from him who came “ to bind up the broken hearted ; to comfort all that mourn.” Whether he was entitled to the appellation, “ Boanerges, a son of thunder,” may be questioned ; but there can be no doubt, that he was a “ Barnabas, a son of consolation.” Of him it may not unfitly be said, that “ God had given him the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to the weary.”

To the commendation now bestowed on the sensibility and sympathy which pervade the volumes of Dr Belfrage, it will be objected by some, that his sensibility is extravagant and effeminate ; that it is liable to the charge of affectation ; and that it verges toward a sickly and morbid sentimentalism. In reply to this objection, two things may be stated. First, It cannot be alleged, with truth, that his sensibility is injudicious or disproportioned. It is never expressed for imaginary calamities, or fictitious sorrows. It is never expended on trifling, to the omission of serious evils ; and it is never greater than the occasion, if duly considered, will amply justify. It may be mentioned, secondly, that, according to the uniform testimony of his friends, the sensibility which breathes in his publications, was in beautiful accordance with his personal character and conduct. If I am not egregiously mistaken, he evinced, in his domestic deportment, and in every part of his conduct, a similar tenderness and delicacy ; and, if he manifested a peculiar sensitiveness under rough or dishonourable treatment, if his own feelings were easily wounded, he was peculiarly tender of the feelings of others, and evinced the warmest gratitude, even for slight offices of regard. Few men, I have understood, would have

been more disgusted with false or extravagant pretensions to generosity and benevolence ; and few men were more prompt to prove the strength of their charity, and the cordiality of their affection, by deeds of substantial kindness.

It may be mentioned, finally, that the writings of Dr Belfrage are distinguished by *beauty*. The properties already considered, are chiefly of a religious or moral kind ; that now specified, belongs to their intellectual or literary qualities. Among the latter, their beauty is perhaps the most conspicuous.

To this assertion it will doubtless be objected, that there is much in his mode both of conception and expression, of which a refined taste will disapprove ; and even the partiality of friendship must allow that this objection is not altogether groundless. It is proper, therefore, to specify at once the deductions with which the general statement respecting the beauty of Dr Belfrage's writings is to be taken.

It cannot be denied, then, that his style, though it had probably become easy and natural to himself, is deficient in ease and variety ; and that it is somewhat elaborate and artificial. There is a certain similarity in the structure and cadence of his sentences : they are too uniformly rhythmical and melodious ; and sense is occasionally sacrificed to sound. He attempts too often to say fine things ; he is too ambitious of ornament ; and, altogether, his composition is too poetical for prose. In some of his works, particularly in his " Sacramental Addresses," he is too fond of personifying the Christian graces and virtues, and other abstract qualities. His enumerations and antitheses recur too frequently ; and the particulars of the former are not always perfectly congruous ; nor do the members of the latter present always a natural or happy contrast. The consequence of this want of freedom, and of this excess of elaboration and embellishment, is, that his composition is characterized by a degree of uniformity, which induces occasionally a feeling of languor.

These are large concessions ; larger, perhaps, than they ought to be, because they are extorted by an anxiety not to

exaggerate Dr Belfrage's excellencies and merits as an author. Notwithstanding these large abatements, it may be confidently asserted, that his writings are characterized by great beauty. If, in his embellishment, there is some tinsel, there is also much gold. The principal fault, indeed, of his embellishment, is not its quality but its profusion. If his figures, and the other brilliant or striking peculiarities of his diction, had been less numerous, they would have been more admired; and the very superabundance of his beauties tends, more than any thing else, to impair their effect.

His writings are perfectly free from the faults of that declamatory and extravagant style, which has lately been introduced, and which has been copied by so many young preachers. He shows no predilection for uncouth or pedantic, for novel or obsolete terms. He indulges not in palling repetitions, or hyperbolical amplifications; nor does he ever expand a single thought, however valuable, beyond all reasonable dimensions. He dispenses liberally from the stores of an exhaustless fancy, but he never deals in mere decoration, or employs images without corresponding ideas.

Even those peculiarities in his mode of conception and expression, which may be disapproved of by a refined taste, will, like the peculiarities of Tacitus, and the later Roman writers, be regarded by many readers, as "*dulcia vicia*," agreeable faults. Take at random a few paragraphs from any of his volumes, and transplant them into pages of "flat and arid common places," or even into the pages of authors endowed with superior intellect, but possessed of little sensibility or imagination, and they will appear like verdant spots in the desert.

Justice and candour require that it be observed further, that, among his works may be found many long passages, if not entire volumes, in which he is both select and sparing in ornament, and the composition of which may be pronounced elegantly simple, "*simplex munditiis*." It is indeed scarcely possible to open any one of his volumes, and not meet with fine things finely said, and with passages of exquisite beauty;

and, even where there are slight blemishes, there is generally such a preponderance of the beautiful, that this quality may be truly predicated as a prominent feature of his writings. There is scarcely a doctrine in the vast sphere of Christian theology, and there is scarcely a duty within the wide compass of Christian morality, to which he does not some where advert; and no topic does he touch without impressing on it the tints and colours of his exuberant fancy. Though not wholly, it is, in no small measure, owing to the union of this and the preceding quality, the union of sensibility and beauty, that religion appears, in his works, in a form so singularly attractive and lovely. As exhibited by him, “her ways are” indeed “ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

Whether the sermons, and the other writings of Dr Bel-frage, ought to be characterized as *eloquent*, is a question which admits of different answers, according to the sense affixed to the term. Frequently, though not in every page, they present “thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.” They have not the force, and vehemence, and splendour which would entitle them to a place in the highest species of eloquence. His “doctrine” does not come with the impetuous and resistless rush of the tempest or the torrent, it “drops as the rain, and distils as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” But if his composition is not pitched in the elevated and impassioned tone of the loftiest oratory, it is to be recollected, that “the mild sentiments, as well as the vehement passions, have their eloquence;” and that there is genuine eloquence, though not eloquence of the highest order, wherever important truth is illustrated and enforced, with more than common ability and earnestness, and with more than an ordinary portion of appropriate imagery. Now, of this eloquence there is much in the writings of our author. Still, however, their predominant characteristic, in a literary or intellectual view, is, that they are affectionate, persuasive, and pleasing, rather than profound or powerful. They do

not exhibit that conjunction of gigantic intellect, of intense and heart-thrilling emotion, of rich fancy, and refined taste, which constitutes “ the perfection of strength and beauty.” In perusing them, therefore, we do not feel as if called to contemplate what has been happily described as “ the rude magnificence of nature ;” or, as if gazing on objects and scenes of romantic or terrific grandeur ;—mighty rivers, stupendous mountains, frightful cataracts, trackless and interminable forests. The impression which they produce resembles rather that experienced on surveying a region which is every where enclosed and cultivated, in which the hand of art is too apparent, but which, though its general aspect is somewhat tame and uniform, contains many rich and pleasing scenes ; fields waving with corn, pastures clothed with flocks, and gardens decked with a profusion of gorgeous and odoriferous flowers.

In Dr Belfrage’s character as an author, there are various other attributes to which it might have been proper to advert, if circumstances had permitted. It might have been proper, for example, to notice his powers for illustration, which are not less remarkable than his talents for embellishment. Such is the fertility of his mind, so ample is the stock of his ideas on every subject, that it seems easy to him to be minute and full, without prolixity or repetition, and without descending to what is commonplace or irrelevant, frivolous or uninteresting. It might have been remarked also, that he is “ mighty in the Scriptures ;” and that his intimate acquaintance with them appears, not so much in the felicity and beauty of his scriptural allusions, or in the light which he throws on obscure and difficult passages, as in the multiplicity, and variety, and aptitude of his Scripture quotations. But on these, and on other particulars, it is impossible to enlarge.

Enough, it is hoped, has been said to supply the materials for the formation of a tolerably accurate estimate both of his talents and writings. The powers of his mind seem, on the whole, to have been harmoniously balanced. No one faculty

was defective or feeble ; but he was certainly far more remarkable for the richness of his fancy, and the warmth of his sensibility, than for the delicacy of his taste, or for his discursive and argumentative powers. Of genius, as distinguished by some from talents, as implying inventive powers, and a capacity of original thought, he possessed a considerable portion ; and this is abundantly evinced in the fulness and originality of his illustrations of subjects, which had often before been well illustrated. His judgement, at the same time, was distinguished by soundness and sobriety ; and probably there is not an instance in all his productions, in which he has been seduced into a wild or paradoxical sentiment, by the love of ingenuity or novelty. It is almost unnecessary to add, that his faculties had been sharpened and invigorated by long and unremitting application ; and that they were all under the control of an enlightened and fervent piety.

Of the value of his writings, also, a little consideration may now enable us to form a correct opinion. His warmest admirers will not claim for him the luminous simplicity, the masculine energy, the logical precision, and faultless elegance of Dr Dick ; nor will it be pretended that he possessed the extraordinary powers of that admirable writer, for simplifying what is intricate, and illuminating what is obscure. Still less has it fallen to his lot, to rescue from neglect some important principle, destined to change the frame and aspect of the church ; and in spite of all the efforts of obloquy and sophistry, to establish that principle on an immoveable basis, by a succession of triumphant defences. The works of Dr Belfrage contain no elaborate critical discussions, no lengthened processes of profound or subtle reasoning, and no specimens of lofty and adventurous speculation. They do not reflect much new light on difficult and controverted questions in divinity ; and while they abound with ingenious remarks, and furnish many specimens of brief and acute argument, it would not be impossible to detect in them instances of illogical and inconclusive reasoning. In-

deed, his doctrinal writings, particularly his remarks on the first part of the Shorter Catechism, excellent as they are, would have been still more excellent, if, without being less imaginative, or less sentimental, they had evinced more of the logician and the theologian.

In what then chiefly does the value of his works consist? and what is precisely its amount? To answer these questions, it is indispensably requisite to keep steadily in view the equitable and reasonable maxim:—"In every work regard the author's end." Dr Belfrage wrote, as was formerly observed, for the edification of the great mass of readers, of "the common people," as well as of the wealthy and the educated. His object was not to discover new truths, nor even to corroborate old ones by new proofs. but to illustrate and apply for general edification, the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, and "the weightier matters of the law." To determine, then, his merits as an author, the question is, How far has he succeeded in this most important undertaking? If the preceding observations be substantially just, we are warranted to reply, that he has been signally successful. Critical discussions, and metaphysical reasonings, and conjectural speculations, instead of advancing, would have obstructed his object; and he has evinced his good sense by not attempting them. But, as has been already remarked, there is scarcely a doctrine in the Christian system, which he has not somewhere stated with accuracy, and surrounded with new illustrations and ornaments; pointing out at the same time, with ability and interest, the aliment which it ministers to devout feeling and a holy practice. And still greater are the ingenuity and skill with which he has applied the precepts of Christianity to the endlessly diversified circumstances, and occurrences, and pursuits of human life. It is to these labours chiefly that his writings are devoted; and if in these labours he has not displayed the genius of a profound philosopher, or a first-rate orator, he has displayed, in an eminent degree, the talents and attainments of an "able minister of the New Testa-

ment." He has shown himself "a scribe well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of God ; and like a wise householder, has brought out of his treasure things new and old."

It is the remark of an eminent Roman poet and critic,* that he is the most successful writer, who blends the useful with the agreeable ; and the remark is applicable to other species of composition, besides that to which its author applies it. Tried by this test, the productions of Dr Belfrage are entitled to the highest praise ; for this union forms their most remarkable characteristic, that to the formation of which their other qualities all concur. They are fitted to be more useful than many writings distinguished by greater talents and greater learning. They array wisdom and piety in the garb of beauty, and are adapted at once to please and edify. Like "the bread of heaven," with which the Israelites were fed in the wilderness, they are fitted to gratify every taste, and to minister nourishment to every constitution. It is scarcely possible to peruse them, and not perceive, that to impart instruction in a beauteous and attractive form, is an object which must often have been uppermost in the mind of the author, even when he was not actually engaged in the business of composition ; and that, with a view to this end, he studied the records of biography and history, and observed the scenes of external nature, and the occurrences of human life. He was "a wise preacher, who still taught the people knowledge ; who gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many wise sayings ; a preacher who sought to find out acceptable words."

While his writings are accommodated to readers of all classes and characters, they are probably better adapted to improve and comfort saints, than to alarm and convert sinners,—to propel forward those who have already entered on "the way of holiness," than to reclaim to it those who are wandering in the paths of folly and iniquity. They contain, undoubtedly, many of those pointed sayings, which are fitted

* "Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci."

to fix themselves in the conscience, “as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies;” but they abound still more with those beautiful remarks, which at once strike the fancy, and touch the heart, and which are “as apples of gold in pictures,” or in a network “of silver.” They reflect the excellencies which adorned his personal character, tending to inspire a devout, and benevolent, and affectionate disposition, “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers,” and “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” What has been said of the writings of Witsius, might, with at least equal propriety, be said of those of Dr Belfrage. “They are like the golden pot that had manna,”—“outwardly bright with burnished gold, inwardly rich with heavenly food.” By these writings, “he being dead, yet speaketh.” By these writings he will long continue to speak, and to “speak to edification, and exhortation, and comfort,”—a renown “far transcending all Greek and Roman fame.”

In judging of the character of an author, it is a natural inquiry, Who are the writers whom he most admired and imitated, or whom he most resembled? Whether Dr Belfrage selected any author as his model, it is perhaps impossible to ascertain. In the exuberance of his imagination, and in some other particulars, he reminds us occasionally of Mr M'Ewen, author of “*Essays on the Types, &c.*,”—a writer, who, had he not been cut off in the flower of his age, would probably have carried pulpit eloquence to a degree of perfection, which it had not before reached in Scotland. Still more frequently do the writings of Dr Belfrage remind us, by their practical and sentimental cast, of those of Miss Hannah More, and of Mr Jay; and it is highly probable, that their works had some influence in modifying the complexion both of his thoughts and his language. His productions, however, though they seldom present long trains of consecutive thought or reasoning, possess a logical coherence, which we search for in vain in the writings of Hannah More; and they are by no means so thickly studded with quaint antitheses, and

brilliant comparisons, and with other sparkling peculiarities ; peculiarities which make it almost impossible to collect and retain the instruction which she conveys, and which render her writings a feast composed of delicacies fit only for a desert,—a dress consisting of fineries fit only for ornament. To those of Mr Jay, the writings of Dr Belfrage have a considerable affinity ; while it must be admitted, that the Scottish divine is inferior to the English preacher in case, and point, and effect, and in the abundance and felicity of scriptural allusions and quotations.

There is another particular, which it would be improper to omit, in estimating Dr Belfrage's merits ; and that is, the multiplicity of his productions. It is no doubt true, that of his published works, a large proportion consists of discourses which had been previously preached to his congregation. Still, however, when we consider the number and importance of his ministerial duties, and the exemplary diligence with which he discharged them, it seems truly astonishing that he was able to prepare so many volumes for the press ; all of them instructive and respectable, and some of them characterized by very superior excellence. It is to be recollected, also, that besides the publications to which he prefixed his name, he contributed a vast number of essays and reviews to different periodicals. The quantity of labour performed by him as an author, though not altogether unexampled, has not been often equalled ; and deserves notice, as indicating at once the facility with which he composed, and the assiduity with which he applied to the work of composition. Whether his performances would have been greatly superior to what they are, if he had expended on them more time and more exertion, is a question which I am unable to answer. But it is certain that they are marked by considerable inequality. His "Sermons to the Young," his "Counsels for the Sanctuary and for Civil Life," and some other volumes of practical discourses, seem to me decidedly the best of his productions.

In concluding this hasty and imperfect sketch, the writer

may be permitted to add, that he would probably never have attempted it, if he had consulted his own powers, and attended to the demands of other duties, instead of yielding to the wish to gratify living friends, and to do honour to the dead. But he ventures to hope, that among the numerous readers of the works of Dr Belfrage, a considerable proportion may peruse the preceding remarks not wholly without interest, were it only for the purpose of ascertaining how far the opinion expressed in them coincides with their own. He is perfectly aware, that it is extremely difficult to reduce matters of taste and criticism to fixed principles, and that there is scarcely any subject affording so much scope for diversity of sentiment as the merits of an author. It will not, therefore, surprise him, if some should dissent widely from the verdict which he has pronounced; and he will be perfectly satisfied, if the majority of his readers shall think that, on the whole, he has approximated to a correct and equitable estimate. Should it be thought, that in any one particular he has treated Dr Belfrage with severity, he will feel deep regret. While he has adverted to faults and blemishes with a reluctant and trembling hand, he has endeavoured to guard against undue partiality; but it is not impossible that, in doing this, he may have been betrayed occasionally into the opposite extreme. Should there be any (as probably there will), who are of opinion that he has presented an exaggerated representation of Dr Belfrage's intellectual endowments and attainments, they will, perhaps, excuse the error, when they recollect that the shades of the tomb have the effect of diminishing the imperfections, and of enlarging and brightening the talents and excellencies of departed friends.

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